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Using Songs to Stimulate Communication in Pair and Group Work Activities in EFL Classes

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Abstract

The diploma thesis deals with the use of songs in teaching the English language at basic school. The thesis focuses on specific qualities of songs that can represent an effective stimulus for communication among students and that can contribute to the development of students' speaking skills. The theoretical part of the paper introduces general advantages of songs in foreign language classes and defines the main aspects of communicative activities. The methodology part suggests important rules that should be followed when song-based communicative activities are to be used during English language lessons. The practical part of the paper includes five detailed activity plans that demonstrate a variety of approaches to the use of songs. The lessons are described, analysed and reflected upon so that their effectiveness could be evaluated. The final evaluation of the project presents conclusions that support the validity of the thesis and suggests the conditions for using song-based communicative activities in English classes.

Key words: song-based activities, communicative activities, information gap, interaction in groups/pairs

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá využitím písní v hodinách anglického jazyka na základních školách. Myšlenka teze se zaměřuje na specifické hodnoty písní, které mohou představovat účinný podnět ke komunikaci mezi studenty a které také mohou přispět k rozvoji jejich mluveného projevu. Teoretická část této práce uvádí obecné výhody písní v hodinách cizího jazyka a popisuje hlavní aspekty komunikačních aktivit. Metodická část navrhuje základní důležitá pravidla pro sestavení komunikačních aktivit založených na písních v hodinách anglického jazyka. Praktická část této práce obsahuje pět detailních plánů aktivit, které ukazují různé přístupy k využití písní. K hodnocení účinnosti aktivit přispěl popis hodin, jejich analýza a reflexe. Výsledky projektu se shodují s hypotézou a navrhuje podmínky pro využití komunikačních aktivit založených na písních v hodinách anglického jazyka.

Klíčová slova: aktivity založené na písni, komunikační aktivity, informační difference, součinnost ve skupinách/párech

Annotation

Diese Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Ausnützung der Lieder im Englischunterricht an Sekundarschulen. Die Thesis richtet sich auf spezifische Werte der Lieder, die einen effektiven Anreiz zur Kommunikation unter Schülern bedeuten können und die auch zur Entwicklung ihres mündlichen Ausdrucks beitragen können. Theoretischer Teil dieser Arbeit führt allgemeine Vorteile der Lieder im Fremdsprachenunterricht an und beschreibt die Hauptaspekte der Kommunikationsaktivitäten. Methodischer Teil stellt wichtige Grundregeln vor, die bei dem Einsatz von Liedern in der Englischstunde gefolgt werden sollten. Praktischer Teil dieser Arbeit beinhaltet fünf Detailpläne der Aktivitäten, die verschiedene Zugänge zur Ausnützung der Lieder zeigen. Zur Bewertung von der Wirkung der Aktivitäten trägt die Stundebeschreibung, -analyse und -reflexion bei. Die Projektergebnisse stimmen mit der Hypothese überein und schlagen Bedingungen für die Ausnützung von auf Liedern begründete Kommunikationsaktivitäten im Englischunterricht vor.

Schlüsselwörter: auf Liedern begründete Aktivitäten, Kommunikationsaktivitäten, Informationsdifferenzen, Interaktion in Gruppen/Paaren

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1. Introduction

Songs in people's lives

For centuries, songs have been an inseparable part of people's lives. Songs have always surrounded people in whatever age of their lives. People just from their childhood listen to various ding-dongs, rhymes, and different types of music. In childhood, they are mostly parents and grandparents who sing various nursery rhymes to their children to calm them down, to provide them relaxed atmosphere. It is generally known that songs also positively influence emotions in the childhood. Rosová claims that music can serve as a factor "that reduces the signs of nervousness of a child" [Rosová, 2007: 8]. Songs also stimulate children's thinking since it is proved that songs, especially in early childhood, can influence intellectual development of children. Songs accompany people's lives even in their later life despite of the fact that dingdongs are substituted by a wide-ranging type of different musical genres. As people grow up, the role of songs in their lives is suddenly changing into more complex one. In the following lines, some basic aspects of songs will be specified and at the same time the significant relation between songs and their roles in people's lives will be outlined.

Songs are like a 'guide' that accompanies people not only at home but also at their work, in the street, in shops. We encounter songs also on the Internet, on TV, in the radio. The point is that people are exposed to music and songs during their whole life in whatever situations. As Lexová points out: "Music can be heard everywhere around us ... it accompanies happy and pleasurable moments ... but on the other hand, music can be also connected with unhappy occasions as funerals" [Lexová, 2007: 3]. Thus, songs have become an unseparable, natural part part of everybody.

In most cases, people listen to songs during their free time while they relax, many people even listen to them when falling asleep. On the other hand, people sometimes listen to songs in order to stimulate their physical condition or even the will to work. No matter where and when we listen to music, music has always a great impact on our actions, feelings and emotions. Roe states that it is "generally acknowledged that the primary appeal is to emotions" [Roe, 1999]. The reasons why people listen to songs can be really various but songs always directly contribute to our senses and therefore evoke great variety of feelings. Roe [1999] for example declares that this primary 'emotional appeal' can be

found in national anthems, love songs or political protest songs. The ‘emotional appeal’ is like the message from the inner world of a song that is sent to our senses to bring to mind for example the feeling of happiness, relaxed atmosphere or the will to keep working. When listening to a song, in addition to melody, we also occasionally realize that just the lyrics can touch our emotions. The reason why lyrics are so impressive is that they tell us the stories about our life, about lives of others, about the whole world we live in. “While music touches our hearts, lyrics and their words flow into our minds and so they draw us into their world” [Rosová, 2007: 3].

Songs also create a specific branch of culture. Murphey claims that “music in its many forms constitutes a powerful subculture with its own mythology, its own rituals, and its own priesthood” [Murphey, 1992: 4]. The point is that music itself can be regarded as the ‘subculture of society’ since every generation has its own culture which is among other things also created by specific trends in music. The role of music as subculture is significant for people in whatever age. People express themselves through music and take it as a part of their identity and a way of living. Roe, for example, explains: “In the second half of the 1950’s, as American rock ’n’ roll began to assume its hegemony over the airwaves ... this new form of popular music began to perceive primarily as a phenomenon of youth” [Roe, 1999]. The point is that particular music (modern Rhythm and Blues, Jazz, Hip Hop, Ska, etc.) and the way it is sung and represented by its artists is a powerful subculture and therefore a powerful model for a lot of people.

Whatever is the role of songs in people’s lives, we can undoubtedly say that this role is indispensable. Songs can be viewed in many facets but not for one person will this facet be always the same. Whether we like songs or not, whether we are children or adult persons, songs can always touch our inner feelings and contribute to our senses. Moreover, songs are like a ‘guide’ that accompanies our every day life and helps us express our feelings, emotions or identity. The power of this ‘guide’ can be nevertheless very helpful not only in our everyday life but also in education. The principal goal of the following chapter will be therefore the description of songs as a very useful prompt in EFL classes.

2. Theoretical part

2.1. Songs in EFL classes

Looking back at my school days at basic school, I always remember two crucial things. The first is, of course, my schoolmates and the second is teachers and the way they taught us. Now, after my teaching practice, I am at the beginning of my own teaching career and I can reflect not only on what can help students to learn the language but also what can help a teacher to fulfil his/her aims in a teaching process. In my teaching practice, I used a lot of techniques and strategies to motivate children and to challenge them to learn. I also shared with my students my interest in songs and found out that songs are a powerful means of teaching. The use of songs in EFL classes offers one of the ways of intensifying the teaching and learning process that is usually accepted by both students and teachers. Songs can help students to learn the language in an indirect way and at the same time, the use of songs can help teachers to fulfil their aims in a relaxed yet working atmosphere. In the following chapter, the basic advantages of the use of songs in EFL classes will be described.

2.1.1. Classroom atmosphere and motivation

Teaching any foreign language can represent a ‘struggle’ between students and a teacher. This can happen when the teacher cannot create a positive relationship between him/her and the students or when the theme of the lesson does not address the learners. However, using songs can evoke friendly and co-operate atmosphere and thus can help not only the teacher but also the students in the whole process of learning. Songs can be used to relax the students, to provide an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and to boost the students’ enthusiasm to work. It does not matter whether the song is blues, pop or classical; each genre can stimulate a very positive association to the study of a language that otherwise may only be seen by the students as frustration, correction or tasks. Griffie explains: “Songs, but especially instrumental music, give us the external cover we need to feel more secure while at the same time providing the internal support to carry on with the task” [Griffie, 1992: 4]. Murphey goes on to say that “songs encourage harmony within oneself and within a group” [Murphey, 1992: 8]. The positive effects described by Griffie and Murphey are also closely connected with the method of Suggestopaedia developed by

Bulgarian psychologist Lozanov. This method takes advantage of music as a means for getting students more relaxed and secure during the learning process. Songs therefore represent the non-threatening and relaxed atmosphere that is necessary for fostering good relations between the teacher and the students, and for facilitating the whole process of learning.

2.1.2. Learning styles

Another reason why to use songs in EFL classes is that the usage of songs can address all learning styles. It is proved that a song can support all students' learning styles and therefore "their learning abilities and strengths" [Whitla, 2006]. Learning styles are classified according to different aspects that are taken as the most distinctive in each classification. Apart from Information processing model, Cognitive, Perceptual, Personality type, Affective and others, the most common classification is Sensory learning style inventory. It classifies learners in the following four learning styles:

The first one is the auditory learning style that is typical of learners who prefer to perceive new information through ears. These students learn best from hearing the teacher, through discussion and listening tasks. With regard to the benefits of the usage of songs in English classes, it can be expected that learners will usually remember and memorize new words or new language items if they can hear the sound and the lyrics of a song.

The second one is the visual learning style that is preferred by students who perceive new information through eyes. Visual style learners learn better when they can see, for example, some actions of the teacher, pictures, symbols, real objects or a text. Students who listen to a song in EFL classes usually work with the text, read the lyrics, see the pictures of the singer or a band, and therefore take information in a way that is favourable for their learning.

The third type is the kinesthetic learning style. Kinesthetic learners prefer learning through movement. This type of learning usually happens through performing actions, moving around the classroom, dancing, clapping, etc. These are actions that are obviously supported by a song. Thus, kinesthetic learners learn through experiencing and doing

things and therefore remember the language items by going back in their minds to what their body was doing.

The last type is called the tactile learning style. This type is sometimes considered to be the same as the kinesthetic type since it is also related to movement. For these learners touching a variety of things means the most effective way of learning since they take in information through the sense of touch and feeling. They like, for example, connecting new words in the lyrics with real objects, playing games or collecting some materials that may relate to the theme of a song.

Since a song is a medium that can be listened to, worked with or performed, all these ways of learning can be supported by a song. Moreover, the use of songs can encourage multisensory stimulation that supports natural and therefore optimal learning.

2.1.3. Cultural significance

Songs also symbolize a unique approach to raising students' awareness of another culture. The point is that songs differ in a variety of musical genres which can be moreover connected to different historical or present-day events. Therefore, songs signify a 'mirror' of different cultures or habits. Griffie explains: "Bringing a song into the classroom entails bringing the culture of the song in with it", and continues that songs "are a part of what makes a generation a generation and the current generation is a global generation rather than a parochial one. The world is evolving a common culture and pop songs are its backbone. By using pop songs in your classroom, you and your students are participating in the emerging world culture" [Griffie, 2002: 5]. An important part of working with a song in EFL classes is the understanding the context of the song. This understanding, which can be done through a discussion about the song, is an inevitable step to explaining the cultural message that the song is conveying.

Apart from creating a non-threatening atmosphere as well as possibilities for integrating different learning styles and bringing a culture to a lesson, a song can stand for important means of developing language skills and subskills.

2.1.4. Skills and subskills integration

The use of songs in EFL classes is often reduced only to some ‘cloze exercises’, like filling in the gaps, when students are supposed to complete the lyrics during some listening activities. Although this usage of songs is definitely one of the most frequent (and certainly effective) ways to enhance students’ listening skills, other skills than just listening skills can be practised through songs. Songs provide many opportunities of practising a foreign language with special focus on fostering all skills and subskills. According to Orlova, and the recent EFL literature on the problem of integrating skills and subskills through songs (Davanellos, Murphey, Griffie, Rampton, Jedynak, etc.), it is possible to name the following:

- a) Practising pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation patterns of the English language. These language elements are stressed when teaching particularly young learners. Songs represent an excellent way for both presenting and practising the sonic form of the language.
- b) Teaching vocabulary, especially in the vocabulary reinforcement stage. In this case, as Murphey adds, songs simply “stick in the head”. He further explains the reason of this aspect and he says that “songs create a state of relaxed receptivity ... without loss of motivation” [Murphey, 1992: 3-5].
- c) Teaching grammar. In this respect, songs are especially favoured by teachers when they want to present or practise the use of the tenses. Students with the support of the rhythm, melody, and constant repetition of lyrics can easily understand and memorize, for instance, a sentence pattern or other aspects of language items.
- d) Teaching listening comprehension. Fostering listening skills through songs is considered to be very common and often the only one way of taking advantage of songs in EFL. Apart from phonetics aspects, students are also trained to understand a text during listening comprehension.
- e) Developing writing skills. An ideal phase in a listening task can be using a song for practising some writing skills, for example considering a possible topic for further thinking about a song in an essay or writing a letter to the main character in the song, in a follow-up stage.

- f) Practising reading skills both for practising the skill of correct reading and reading comprehension skills. For this purpose, mainly lyrics of a song can be used.
- g) Teaching speaking. In this case, songs are used as a stimulus for either some speaking or some communicative activities with further possible (evoking) class discussions.

[Orlova, 2003]

Using songs in EFL classes can be really useful for different aims and objectives in the whole learning process. However, songs have also their drawbacks. These drawbacks might be the reason why some teachers still hesitate to use songs in the classroom. According to Davanellos, the most crucial drawbacks are:

- 1) poor quality language
- 2) songs are not serious, it is just waste of time
- 3) students just want to listen not to work
- 4) songs are too noisy
- 5) it is time demanding to find an appropriate song
- 6) teachers do not have the right equipment
- 7) teachers cannot sing

[Davanellos, 1999: 15]

These are things that the teachers should be aware of. Not all songs can be taken to the class since their language is sometimes hardly understandable even for the teacher. On the other hand, whether a song contains some slang language or informal speech (not some obscene language!), it can represent a possible way to expose students to the use of particular part of the language that is common among certain social groups of people.

The statement that songs are not serious is misleading as there are many reasons why to take them in the classroom. Even the songs that sing about unreal situations or fantasy can be taken in the class. The teacher can even utilize the unimportance of a song and change it into an advantageous element that can boost learners' thinking and imagination. A song can be used for a lot of purposes that can transform not a serious song into a very important task.

Sometimes, when listening to a song, it may happen that students just concentrate too much on the melody of the song. This can be taken even as an advantage since it is known that remembering language items can be fostered by music and students often unpurposefully remember words thanks to the melody that accompanies these words.

The argument that playing a song is too noisy might be true; however, the teacher does not necessarily have to play the song with the highest volume since it is not the main goal of using songs in EFL classes. Whether it is a meaningful noise, then Davanellos explains that “certain level of noise has to be acceptable in a language class” [Davanellos, 1999: 14].

Teachers often find choosing a song which would be appropriate for their classes time demanding and therefore not worth their effort. The solution of this task may be to ask students to bring their favourite pieces of music to class. Then the teacher can select the song that would be appropriate for his/her teaching aims.

To use a song in EFL classes does not necessarily mean to sing. As Davanellos claims: “Using a song does not require a teacher to be a music specialist or pop singer. While an interest in songs and music and willingness to sing along with the cassette is desirable, students are often happy to do the singing. ... There are many ways of presenting songs which do not require a teacher to sing and which leave the teacher ‘free’ to focus on students” [Davanellos, 1999: 15].

There are other possible drawbacks as regards songs in EFL classes; however, benefits that were mentioned before outweigh these possible problems. Finally, it is important to remember the golden rule of using songs in EFL classes:

“Don’t overdo it! Once you have experienced all the benefits and joys of using songs in a class, it is too easy to use them again and again. Remember to vary your language-learning so that students retain their enthusiasm” [Davanellos, 1999: 15].

2.2. Communication in EL

2.2.1. Necessity of communication

Communication is said to be a process that can be generally regarded not only as an exchange of thoughts or information but also as mutual interaction within the subjects. Being able to communicate is the skill that people learn from their “early childhood, because they want to express their feelings, needs” [Portíková, 1997: 10)]. The question why people need to develop the ability to communicate even in their later age is that they need to understand others and, more importantly, that they need to be understood by others. Communication is, therefore, considered to be as “the main means of understanding people” [Portíková, 1997: 10)].

People today communicate among themselves through various ways. They can communicate directly through face-to-face communication or indirectly through SMS, the Internet, letters, etc. Whatever way people use to communicate, they always use their language or some body language in order to express their thoughts or to gain some information. Expressing thoughts and gaining information is also one of the main reasons why people learn foreign languages. Nowadays, the communicative ability in a foreign language is very important since more and more people, for example, go abroad to study or work in foreign institutions.

Therefore, the ability to communicate in a foreign language has been regarded as a main goal when learning any foreign language. As Richards declares: “The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second or foreign language learners. Learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how well they feel improved in their spoken language proficiency” [Richards, 2005: 1-2]. The point is that although developing grammatical competence definitely plays an irreplaceable role when learning a foreign language, the importance of being able to communicate in the target language is nowadays generally regarded as the most essential goal in the teaching and learning process.

However, the fact is that developing grammatical competence at basic schools sometimes prevails and it happens very often that students are not able to express their

thoughts properly; they struggle when they are required to communicate and often they give up and resort to their mother tongue. To be able to communicate is often taken as a natural skill that people learn (naturally) indirectly just as they learn their mother tongue. Therefore, it is more important to teach students the grammatical items of a foreign language and make them use the language correctly at expense of fluency. Bygate states: “Speaking is in many ways an undervalued skill. Perhaps this is because we can almost all speak, and so take the skill too much for granted” [Bygate in Portíková (1987) 1997: 12].

In the following passage, the focus will be put on describing the communication and its important role in EFL classes. Firstly, however, it is important to distinguish between speaking and communication.

2.2.2. Speaking versus communication

Although the terms ‘speaking’ and ‘communication’ are both parts of general term ‘spoken interaction’, it is necessary to distinguish between these two terms. The term ‘speaking’ itself is rather connected to producing one’s performance in terms of, for example, public speech in front of an audience. It is supposed to be rather a monologue that is produced by someone who wants to say something. Some other examples of ‘speaking’ are, according to Richards, for example “giving a class report about a school trip, conducting a class debate, giving lecture or giving a speech of welcome” and therefore it is a kind of speech that “is often evaluated according to its effectiveness or impact on the listener” [Richards, 2005: 5]. It is also necessary to mention that when giving a speech, the emphasis is put on the accuracy of expressions and the appropriateness of the whole performance.

As regards ‘communication’, this term is mainly linked with exchanging information among people. It is an interaction among people where each person takes some part. When comparing ‘communication’ with ‘speaking’, there is a big difference since: “Communication is a two-way process between the speaker and the listener..., transmitting information from one person to another, involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding” [Byrne, 1976: 8-9]. In addition to this, it is worth mentioning that the main aim for teaching and communicative activities is, in contrast to

teaching speaking, not in giving priority to accuracy of expressions “as long as information is successfully communicated or understood” [Richards, 2005: 4].

2.2.3. Communicative activities in EFL classes

In most schools, there is still a tendency to put great emphasis on grammatical knowledge of a foreign language rather than on developing students' communicative skills. It seems obvious that students need to have some grammatical knowledge to be able to speak; however, it happens very often that this focus on grammar prevails even if students are not beginners. When the teacher focuses just on developing grammatical competence of students, it may possibly happen that students 'accumulate' rather the passive knowledge of a language. Scrivener [2005: 147] describes this problem as 'up-in-the-head' mode and he further claims that it is very difficult to make these learners communicate since they cannot use the language actively. The lack of communicative activities in EFL classes can have also another negative impact on students. They may have problems with expressing their thoughts and feelings in a fluent way. In addition to, the fact that learners may have rather the passive knowledge of a language, it is very important to realize that the process of 'transformation' this passive knowledge into partly active may, in many cases, mean a very long process that sometimes is not necessarily successfully fulfilled.

The lack of communicative activities has its reason not only in giving priority to developing grammar competence of learners. According to Nováková, one of other reasons is that it is difficult to make students talk about something since:

- It happens very often that students find the topic rather boring or ridiculous to talk about.
- Students feel shy and embarrassed when they are to perform a speech.
- Students do not have sufficient vocabulary related to the topic.
- They are afraid of making mistakes, which may possibly hold them 'back' in front of the teacher and the whole class. [Nováková, 2004: 8-10]

These decisive factors are the most frequent reasons for the lack of communication in EFL classes. In order for the teachers to change this situation, it is necessary to

understand what makes an activity a communicative one. Therefore, some basic features crucial for arising communication among learners will be pointed out.

2.2.4. Basic features of communicative activities

The first thing to mention is that students should have a communicative purpose that is considered as the most important factor when making students communicate about something. Gower declares: “The most important point to remember is that students must have a *reason* for speaking in order for the activity to be truly communicative; there must be a ‘gap’ between the speakers to be filled” [Gower, 1995: 101]. Scrivener [2005: 152] adds that this ‘gap’ is typical for communication since people communicate in cases when somebody has a piece of information that is unknown for others. This ‘gap’ might be, according to Gower, “either:

- an opinion gap (*I don’t know what to think about this topic*) and/or
- an information gap (*You have some information I need to know*)” [Gower, 1995: 101].

Klippel [2005: 6] also agrees with the presence of these two kinds of ‘gaps’ in communicative activities and further suggests that the content of ‘gaps’ should be really worth talking about since students mostly do not like to discuss trivia.

Communication cannot take place if students are not actively involved in this task. As in every lesson, during every activity done in an EFL class, it is very important to activate students. In a communicative activity, the importance of being active is crucial since these activities are mainly student-centred, which means that students are in the centre of the whole teaching and learning process. Student-centred activities are based on activating students while focusing on students’ needs, accepting their learning styles, interests and abilities. Being active during a communicative activity is also closely linked with the feeling of security. Klippel [2005: 7] adds that telling somebody his/her opinion is not always easy even for the most extrovert person and therefore friendly and cooperative atmosphere, not only within a class but also within a group, is essential.

Another basic aspect of communicative activities is motivation of students. Motivation is a driving force that makes students communicate. Motivation might be generally divided into two major categories, intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is derived from an external stimulus when students are motivated, for example, due to a need for getting a job, going abroad or, generally spoken, due to their future life as such. The intrinsic motivation is a driving force that is derived from the 'inner' interest of students in English, which means that students take the learning of English as their hobby that they do with their own pleasure.

As regards this kind of motivation, it is important for the teacher to put emphasis on the right selection of methods, strategies and activities. The question of motivation is generally considered by teachers as the most difficult thing to realize in a class, however, motivation is the key factor for starting any activity in EFL classes.

An important point to remember is that "success is also based on students' willingness to learn to speak a foreign language, which may be influenced by the teacher's methods used in teaching communication and, above all, his or her personality. Considering these, teachers should realize how important role they play in encouraging the students to learn to speak a foreign language" [Temerová, 2007: 8-9].

Finally, the basic presumption for every communicative activity is that students are prepared to talk about something. Students therefore have to know some language items as vocabulary, structures, phrases, etc. Students also have to be prepared thematically, so they have to know something about a topic to be discussed. The whole preparation for a communicative activity is therefore essential and hardly any of communicative activities can be done successfully without it.

These basic considerations represent the main characteristics of communicative activities in general. The question is, whether there exists a way through which these requirements could be taken into practice. The following chapter therefore discusses possible ways to fulfil all these requirements of effective communicative activities in EFL classes.

2.2.5. Songs and communication

The main concern of this diploma thesis is to stimulate students' communication while taking advantage of songs. Therefore, the attention now is paid to the aspects of songs that can conform with all the above mentioned requirements for setting a communicative activity in EFL classes.

Songs and the presence of a 'gap'

As already mentioned, one of the basic features of communicative activities is the presence of 'information' or 'opinion gap'. Cranmer and Laroy [1992, 2-4] even claim that songs can offer more than these two 'gaps'. They state that there is also a 'curiosity gap' that "goes a great deal further than the 'information gap' or 'opinion gap'. Songs represent "...an instant talking point ... as soon as there are two or more listeners. For no two people will hear a piece of music in quite the same way, not only because they are different people but because their moods and even physical states may be different" [Cranmer, Laroy, 1992: 2-4].

Songs as a prompt for expressing thoughts

Songs are unique for their complexity as they represent a great variety of language items used in a context. Songs provide a great range of vocabulary and more importantly, a great range of a 'speaking discourse' such as, for example, fixed phrases, fillers, conjoined short phrases, clauses or repetition. A song, due to its unique atmosphere, melody, rhythm, and repetition may provide students a great possibility to hear, remember and even apply a great range of language items. Orlova also declares that songs help students to develop their 'esthetic appreciation' because songs "help students to shape their artistic tastes in formulating a critical evaluation of the songs they listen to and discuss" [Orlova, 2003]. However, the most important aspect is that songs can represent a starting point for a discussion. Students can discuss themes of songs, genres, or lyrics. Students can exchange their opinions about lyrics, about main ideas of songs, about contexts of songs.

Songs and motivation

Songs may not only stimulate the positive approach to learning, but mainly, according to Orlova [2003], inspire through this positive approach students' emotions. This emotional influence can inspire students to "express his/her attitude towards what he/she has heard" [Orlova, 2003]. It is very important to mention the fact that songs can really

make students talk since students spend a lot of time with songs. They listen to them, some of them produce music, they talk about current trends, etc. The point to remember is that if students participate during the selection of a song for a possible discussion in EFL classes, then it is very likely that they will talk about something that might be very close to them.

Although the idea of using songs for the purpose of raising communication in EFL classes may sound interesting, the whole process of preparing an activity based on a song for such a purpose is not easy. The aim of the following practical part will be therefore to present basic methodological principles of the use of a song in EFL classes to trigger communication.

3. METHODOLOGICAL PART

Using songs in the language lessons has its essential purpose not only for the language itself but also for creating a positive atmosphere that influences both teaching and learning processes. It is important, however, to set some basic methodological principles that are necessary to follow when taking songs to a class and use them effectively.

3.1. Selection of songs for communicative activities

When the teacher wants to use songs as a stimulus for communication among students, it is important to consider several aspects. The first important aspect to consider is a question of choosing the song so that it can become a real contribution to the lesson. The teacher can choose from a variety of songs that might be useful since their melody is catchy, their lyrics are interesting or they are simply popular. Nevertheless, not every song that is on the top of the music chart is necessarily the right one.

Based on my own experience with the use of a variety of songs for different teaching aims, and conclusions based on literature (Scrivener, Orlova, Cranmer and Laroy...), these basic principles can be considered as crucial ones:

3.1.1. A song a teacher knows

Before taking songs to a class, the teacher should primarily think of the songs he/she knows. Choosing the song the teacher knows is very important since the teacher has to believe in the value of the material. The point is that students are very attentive and curious in everything the teacher does and if they can see that the teacher knows the song and really wants to share it with them, then they may be more motivated and willing to cooperate. Although choosing the song the teacher knows may seem obvious, the reason why many activities with songs do not work is the fact that the teacher chooses the song just by chance without knowing, for example, the lyrics or basic information about the origin of the song. As Orlova confirms: “When I use musical material for the first time, I always choose the songs I know and love myself. This enables me to be more emotionally persuasive as I expose my students to the songs and their interpretation of them” [Orlova,

2003]. Cranmer and Laroy [1992: 5] add that there does not exist the song which is simply right or wrong, but what matters is that the teacher should have the confidence to work with the song since this is a basic precondition for being successful when using songs in EFL classes.

3.1.2. A song with appropriate lyrics

There are some general aspects of the lyrics of the songs that have to be considered every time when choosing songs for whatever purpose in EFL classes. Therefore, the teacher should always ask:

- “Are the lyrics of the song clearly audible?
- Is the level of difficulty appropriate for my class?
- Does the song include a lexical field which fits well in the course?” [Hancock, 1998: 7]

The question of the appropriate lyrics plays a very important role. If students do not understand the lyrics then it is very likely that they will not understand the message of the whole song and therefore it would be very difficult for students to develop discussion. On the other hand, some authors (for example Cranmer and Laroy) even argue that the lyrics can be distracting when the teacher wants to use the melody of music in order to stimulate students and therefore, according to their opinions, it is better to use some classical music without lyrics. Some music with lyrics may, according to Cranmer and Laroy [1992: 7-8], hold students back from the whole message of the song. Cranmer and Laroy further explain: “What we have found, though, is that for the purpose of stimulating in the inner eye, pop and rock music tend not to work well. Words are distracting and the range of images stimulated is much more limited” [Cranmer, Laroy, 1992: 8].

Sometimes it may happen, when the teacher wants to stimulate students through the song with the lyrics, that the lyrics can confuse students. This, in my opinion, happens when students do not know the vocabulary in the lyrics, the lyrics are not appropriate to students’ age and the level of thinking, the theme of the song is not ‘up-to-date’, etc. However, if students know the vocabulary and thus they can understand at least the core

idea of the lyrics, then the lyrics play very important role as students can better understand what the song is about.

Griffie [1992: 8-9] points out that many songs are ‘socially questionable’ due to their lyrics. This aspect was already mentioned as one of the possible drawbacks of using songs and mainly their lyrics in EFL classes. The recommendation is either not to use them (in cases that songs contain some obscene language) or explain the lyrics as a language of a particular group. Needless to say that the teacher has to be very careful when choosing the songs in which the lyrics are above the student’s cognitive level. If the teacher still hesitates to use the song with some questionable lyrics then it is recommended to ask a colleague about his/her opinion about the song or rather not to use this song.

3.1.3. Students’ interests

One possibility to motivate students is to let them choose the song they like. Involving students in the selection of the song means to arouse the possibility that students will have a natural desire and motivation to communicate about things that are close to them. Nevertheless, the teacher cannot involve students in the process of choosing the song on the spot without a proper preparation. It is very important that students are first of all told about some basic rules that they have to follow. Some of the basic rules that students should follow were already mentioned above and can be extended by a few more:

- “The song must be an example of a particular musical trend.
- There shouldn’t be any form of violence in it.
- The song should contain a certain artistic image” [Orlova, 2003].

3.1.4. A song with a ‘message’ to talk about

If a song should serve as an incentive for raising communication among students, then it is necessary to choose the song that conveys an issue that is worth talking about. This message of the song does not have to be necessarily a theme of ‘love’, although it is definitely the most frequent theme that songs are about, but it might be, for example, the themes of some cultural trends, relationships among people, or social problems in general. Hancock [1998: 7] adds that if the song contains some clear characters or a plot in the

lyrics (characters or a plot is in this case a ‘message’) then the whole song can stand for the theme-based activity. In addition to this, the presence of the ‘message’ in the song can be also seen in the melody of the song that is an inseparable part of it. The melody might serve, besides the lyrics, also as a good starting point for a discussion.

3.1.5. The purpose and appropriateness of a song

Finally, the teacher has to consider for what purpose he/she wants to use the song. Therefore, the teacher has to thoroughly consider the aims and objectives and judge how the song could accommodate these goals. The teacher should consider whether to use the song for the purpose of teaching new vocabulary, new language items, pronunciation or, for example, for the purpose of provoking communication. Another point to consider is whether the song fits in the whole lesson theme, organisation or focus. As Griffie [1992: 6-7] claims: “The best situation is when the song you select is a direct complement to your lesson”.

All the aspects mentioned in this chapter play an essential role when the teacher wants to choose the right song for raising communication in EFL classes. The next section will focus on other important methodological principles that concern pair or group work.

3.2. The need for pair and group work

One of the key presumptions for making students communicate is to allow them to work in pairs or groups. Larsen-Freeman proposes that it is important “to facilitate small group and paired activities in which students have opportunities to interact. The activities themselves often engage students in communicative tasks such as filling information gaps using authentic materials” [Larsen-Freeman in Hiep (2000) 2005: 3]. To allow students to work with their partners means to provide them conditions promoting possible communication in which they can meaningfully express their ideas.

Organizing a class in pairs or groups provides a lot of opportunities for students to practise the language. When practising communication, organizing a class in pairs or groups is very important for students since:

- It effectively reduces anxiety among L2 students [Tsui in McCafferty et al. (1994) 2006: 27].
- It provides supportive environment which increases motivation among learners [Long and Porter in McCafferty et al. (1985) 2006: 27].
- It offers a high degree of students' autonomy since pair/group work provides them a possibility to explore their own interests with freedom [McCafferty et al. 2006: 27].

The main aim of organizing a class in pairs/groups for a communicative activity is to create an atmosphere which is friendly and co-operative. Based on my own experience as the student and the teacher, students are rather likely to express their ideas when they can work with their colleagues. As Foralová confirms: "In addition, most students, as students themselves report, are more 'eager' to share their ideas and impressions with a few closer classmates than with the whole class or the teacher. This may help to increase students' motivation to embark upon the task at all and also to complete it" [Foralová, 2007: 71].

Another point to remember is that pair/group work provides students an opportunity to think about their ideas in a 'safe atmosphere'. This is also a big advantage of pair/group work which helps to reduce possible fear of being 'called on' immediately after setting some questions from the teacher. Foralová declares that "what students may perceive advantageous is that they are given time to think of what to say and the opportunity to rehearse their speech in a 'low-risk' situation before they are called on" [Foralová, 2007: 71].

3.2.1. Basic principles of pair/group work

In order to make the use of the terminology easier, the term pair/group work is used for the purpose of this diploma thesis. However, it might be useful to divide these forms of learning and defines them briefly. According to Vilímec [2006: 25], some experts do not distinguish between these two organizational forms (for example Byrne) and talk about these terms generally as about 'small group work', some authors define basic principles for each of them separately. Doff presents the following principles of pair work:

“In pair work, the teacher divides the whole class into pairs. Every student works with his or her partner, and all the pairs work at the same time (it is sometimes called ‘simultaneous pair work’) ... this is not the same as ‘public’ or ‘open’ pair work, with pairs of students speaking in turn in front of the class ” [Doff in Vilímec (1991) 2006: 25].

Group work is, on the other hand, described usually as an organizational form with more than two students. As Doff explains: “In group work, the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together (usually four or five students in each group). As in pair work, all the groups work at the same time” [Doff in Vilímec (1991) 2006: 23].

No matter whether students work in pairs or groups, it is very important for the teacher to divide students into groups, so that the communication is facilitated by this organizational form. The thing is that the basic presumption for raising communication in a class is that students work with their peers in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere. The teacher needs to get familiar with students in order to find the right way of forming a group and observe not only their language performance but also their behaviour within a group of the class. Klippel [2005: 5] adds that although the teacher gets familiar with students, it may happen that a student feels some kind of embarrassment or shyness when expressing his/her ideas to others. Therefore, the teacher has to be very sensitive and open to this kind of situations and possibly give permission to students who do not want to answer some personal questions or refuse to cooperate with some mates.

If the teacher has to make a decision how to group students, he/she can decide according to the common strategies:

a) giving students the choice

This type of grouping gives students an opportunity to work with somebody they like. Therefore, in this case, it is very likely that students will work in a friendly atmosphere and furthermore that they will be willing to communicate among themselves. On the other hand, Budden informs that letting students choose their partner may lead to the same formation of groups all the time and it “won’t benefit the group as a whole in the long run” since “friends may not necessarily always work well together” [Budden, 2008]. Harmer adds that this type of organization

may also “exclude less popular students altogether so that they find themselves standing on their own when the pairs or groups are formed” [Harmer, 2001: 120].

b) random grouping

This way of grouping is mostly seen as fair to all students. This grouping is arbitrary so everybody has the same chances to choose the partner according to the teacher’s random selection of groups. There are several ways of organizing this type of grouping. Budden [2008], for example, suggests using coloured cards that are distributed randomly to students. Then students who get the same colour sit together and make pairs or groups. Based on my own experience, this way of grouping is always interesting for students as they are curious who they will work with. Of course, it might happen that a student refuses to work with a partner he/she does not like. In this case, it is necessary to mention that if the teacher observes such a problem then he/she can change the members in a group or can become a member of that group for some time. By doing this, the teacher can try to involve all the members of the group in the discussion and try to set a cooperative atmosphere again.

c) selecting the groups

The teacher can also decide that he/she divides students himself/herself. This enables the teacher to put some stronger and weaker students together so that the stronger ones can help the weaker students. This, of course, requires observing students several times. Harmer [2001: 121] also suggests that it is possible to divide students according to their level to do some different tasks. Dividing students into groups according to their levels provides an opportunity for the teacher “to go to a group of weaker students and give them the special help they need but which stronger students might find irksome” [Harmer, 2001: 121].

3.2.2. The teacher's role in pair/group work

The role of the teacher in pair/group work is very important. In the following section, therefore, some basic aspects of the role of the teacher during pair/group as a very decisive factor during communicative activities will be pointed out.

Temerová [2007: 16] describes specific roles that the teacher has to perform. She describes the teacher as a manager who sets up activities that should be communicative, then as a consultant who offers students advice and help, a conductor and monitor who checks whether students understand and do a task effectively, and finally as an organizer who should be skillful in teaching these activities. All these roles are crucial for accomplishing all the aims of a communicative activity. Apart from these crucial roles, Klippel [2005: 8] also mentions other two points that should not be neglected:

- The moment of joining the activity

The teacher has to consider when to join the discussion and when to let the discussion just 'flow' and stay in the background. According to Klippel [2005: 8], the moment when the teacher joins the discussion can help to reduce "the psychological distance between the teacher and students ... of course, the teacher has to refrain from continually correcting students or using her greater skill in the foreign language..." The point is that students are curious about the teacher's opinion and therefore sometimes the teacher's idea can be a good starting point for a discussion. However, students have to feel that the teacher is like another member of the group and not somebody who just wants to hear their opinion in order to correct them. On the other hand, an advantage of non-participation in a communicative activity is that the teacher can discreetly observe the class (or just some students) and "note common mistakes for revision at a later stage" [Klippel, 2005: 8].

- Principles of correction

The basic aim of communicative activities is to make students talk as much as possible. Thus, the teacher should realize that too much of interrupting students can destroy the positive 'flow' of communication. According to Klippel [2008: 8], students should be helped only when they want help; whether students feel lost when expressing their ideas, the teacher should try to encourage them to find an alternative way to what they want to say (a list of possible speech acts that might help students to express themselves is in

appendix 1). Budden [2008] adds that too much of correcting students can also lead to their loss of motivation; however, “the other extreme is to let the conversation flow and not correct any mistakes”. Budden goes on to say that correcting students should always have the ‘positive effect’ on them regardless the way the teacher decides to correct. One of the possible ways to realize this ‘positive effect’ is, according to Budden [ibid.], giving students the opportunity to participate on setting some correcting rules, which can moreover make the relation between students and the teacher very positive.

3.2.3. Songs as a prompt for communication

As regards types of communicative activities based on songs, textbooks for basic schools usually offer communicative activities that deal mostly only with lyrics with the aim to practise variety of reading or listening skills. However, both melodies and lyrics of songs can provide many different opportunities to practise communication. Based on my own experience and some suggestions taken from the literature (Murphey, Orlova, Griffiee...), communication among students can be based on the interpretation of the song/melody, on the analysis of the lyrics/melody and the reactions to possible questions about it. Apart from the improvement of students’ communicative skills, working with a song can enable learners become familiar with another level of culture and English outside the class.

4. HYPOTHESIS

Songs in EFL classes can serve as an effective tool for teaching English. They can stimulate students' positive attitudes towards learning English, promote relaxed and stress-free atmosphere and therefore strengthen their confidence. If this considerable power of songs is appropriately applied to an English language lesson with respect to basic methodological principles as well as to language and cognitive levels of learners, songs can become an effective incentive to encourage communication and to contribute to the development of students' speaking skills.

5. THE TEACHING PROJECT

This chapter describes the conditions, steps and realization of the teaching project. All these elements became a basis for designing the lesson plans with their final evaluation.

5.1. Theoretical conclusions

In the theoretical part of this diploma thesis, the essential factors that make songs in EFL classes useful and effective were outlined. The presence of the motivational role of songs, the positive and friendly atmosphere created by songs, their cultural value, the possibility to accommodate songs according to students' learning styles and the integration of skills/subskills were described. All these factors support the idea that songs stand for an effective tool for teaching English. Considering these advantages alongside with features of songs as a valuable tool for provoking a discussion among students, the major factors of communicative activities were pointed out. As the main assumption of this thesis is that songs can become a stimulus for communication among students, the theoretical research also discussed the principles of pair/group work as well as the principles of choosing the right song for a possible discussion.

5.2. Aims of the project

The main aim of the practical part is to verify the hypothesis which claims that songs, if appropriately chosen, can be an effective stimulus for practising communication among students. Therefore, these are the crucial questions to be proved:

Can songs stimulate students' willingness to express their ideas?

Can songs stand for a good starting point to communication?

Can songs provide opportunities for creating information (opinion) gaps?

5.3. Research methods

This section deals with the collection of data necessary for the design of the project. Most of the research data were, apart from the theory, collected during my teaching practice at elementary school in Chotěboř. Apart from the theoretical analysis, the research consisted of the interviews with three teachers and the analysis of the course books that were used at that school.

Interviews with teachers

The aim of the interview with three teachers was to find out their experience with using music in EFL classes. The interview was done at elementary school during my teaching practice in Chotěboř and I asked the interviewees three crucial questions.

- What is your experience with using music in EFL lessons?
- Have you ever tackled any problems with using music in your lessons?
- What was the song used for? Was the song used, for example, for teaching vocabulary, pronunciation, some language structures or practising communication?

To begin with, all three teachers told me that they had some experience with music in their lessons. They added that this experience was mostly positive. All the teachers used songs that were integrated in their course books as some follow-up activities. They told me that the aim of those songs was mainly to practice some new vocabulary or language structures. They all agreed that the students mostly enjoyed every song in their course books despite the fact that some of the songs were rather old-fashioned. As for the example, in the course book *Project 2* there was a song written by Beatles and one teacher expected the students to refuse to work with it. However, the students enjoyed this song and participated quite well.

When I asked these teachers whether they ever had to tackle any problems about using music in their lessons, one teacher told me that she still hesitates to use other songs than the songs presented in her course books since she finds it difficult to choose a really appropriate song which would fit in her lessons. She told me that the songs which she likes are, in her opinion, completely de-motivating for the students and therefore she refuses to use them. All three teachers agreed that they find difficult to choose songs that would have

appropriate lyrics. They claimed that the songs they would finally take to their classes would be either too difficult or not interesting for their students.

Although all the teachers said that they mostly use songs for practicing new vocabulary or language structures, they find using songs as a possible stimulus for communication among students as a good idea. Two teachers claimed that it sounds as a great idea as most of students talk about music, have their favourite singers. However, these teachers claimed that searching for the song that would stimulate students to talk would be very difficult and time consuming. They also mentioned that the song as a possible theme for a discussion would be a great idea rather for the eighth or ninth graders who have higher language proficiency than the younger students. These teachers also added that using songs as a stimulus for communication would be a good idea rather for some after-school activities when students would have more time to think about the songs. On the other hand, one teacher told me that she would rather still use songs for practicing pronunciation or vocabulary since songs are, according to her opinion, accepted by students very individually and therefore using them as a topic to be discussed should not work for every student.

After these short interviews, I realized several crucial aspects which I had not thought before. Some of those aspects were:

- How to prepare the students for the activity they have not done before?
- Will the students react positively if they are to express their ideas about a song?
- Should I use a song as a stimulus for discussion rather for the older (eighth and ninth form) students? Is it possible to use a song as a stimulus for communication even with the younger students?

After reconsidering these aspects, several reasons made me resolve to involve rather the older students (eighth and ninth graders) in the activities. The main reason was that there were not so many opportunities to prepare especially the younger students for communicative activities within the scope of the teaching practice. These communicative activities required appropriate level of English that would facilitate rather than hinder the students from using their imagination and thinking. Therefore, I decided rather to work with the older students who were supposed to be more skilful in English. In order to

increase the motivation of the students, I decided to play some of the songs on my own so that the students felt that I was also the part of the group and that I am interested in music.

Analysis of course books

The brief survey of course books was done in order to find out the approach towards using music in terms of developing speaking skills in EFL used in these textbooks. Another aim of the survey was to discover a possible way the song-based activities could have been designed in this project. The following course books, which I used in the classes at basic school in Chotěboř, were chosen:

- 1) *English for Life*, Pre–intermediate, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.
- 2) *Project English 3*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000.
- 3) *New Project English 3*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

The course book *English for Life* by Tom Hutchinson was published in 2008 and therefore was relatively new comparing it to all the course books I had come over during my teaching practice. The reason why I decided to analyse briefly this new course book was that I wanted to find out what types of song-based activities it provides. Firstly, this course book looks very attractive, as there are many modern photos that are taken from people's everyday life. The syllabus of the course book is rather topic-based oriented and deals with the themes that are close to people's lives such as life events, home life, routines, etc. This book provides many opportunities to practise the speaking skills, which might not seem from the first point of view. Each topic includes some speaking activities that aim to help students to express their own opinions or to discuss certain ideas with their partners. As regards exploitation of songs in this course book, they are not incorporated at all except for the topic 'The father of Soul Music' and one activity dealing with a student's opinion on his/her favourite band.

The basic difference between the course books *Project English 3* and *English for Life* is that *Project English 3* does not provide so many up-to-date topics as the course book *English for Life*. On the other hand, which is signifying, the *Project English 3* provides more opportunities for practising the language through songs. Each chapter includes a song that deals not only with practising, for example, new vocabulary or language structures but also with developing a possible discussion among students. The

song activities in several tasks require from students to be involved emotionally, to react to the lyrics as well as to work with them. During my teaching practice in Liberec and Chotěboř, this book was the course book of English language lessons and I had the opportunity to try some of these song activities which always were accepted by the students positively.

The course book *New Project English3* was, as well as the course books described above, written by Tom Hutchinson. This new edition addresses more up-to-date issues than the 'older' version of the *Project*. Contrary to the 'older' version of the *Project*, this new course book provides the teacher with better orientation in each chapter as the format of the texts is better organized and not over-filled with many additional exercises. The *New Project*, as well as the course book *English for Life*, has an extra DVD attached which serves for students as a supplement material for practising, in a friendly way at home, their English. As well as the 'older' version of the *Project*, this new one offers several songs for students to practise some language items, such as new vocabulary through activity as gap filling. The point to mention is that both the 'old' and *New Project 3* include several authentic songs with clearly audible lyrics.

To conclude, all the course books except *English for Life* include songs that aim to practise to some extent speaking skills. However, in my opinion, it would be possible to modify, develop or refine these songs so that they can be used for other purposes. Therefore, I tried to prepare activities that would represent a variety of approaches to songs with the main focus on communicative activities. Some of the activities were prepared on my own, some of them with suggestions taken from the literature (Klippel, Orlova, Murphey and Cranmer and Laroy).

5.4. Activities design

The design of the activities described in the lesson plans (see chapter 6. – Lesson plans and reflections) was adjusted in accord with several important factors. The first important factor required that the activities had to correspond with the syllabus of the English language for the eighth or ninth form students. Moreover, the aim of the activity had to be in concord with the aim of the regular lessons and another important factor was

that the difficulty of the activity had to correspond with the actual language level and cognitive maturity of the learners so that the students could actively participate in the activities.

Special attention was centred on the selection of the songs. As was already mentioned in the methodological part of this paper, the basic principles concerned these rules are:

- The teacher has to know the song.
- The song must have a 'message' to talk about.
- If working with the lyrics, they must be appropriate (clearly audible and understandable for the students with no violence in it...).

The main emphasis when preparing a communicative activity was also put on setting a meaningful task with the presence of a communicative (information, opinion-curiosity) 'gap' so that the students were motivated to discuss. The design of the communicative activities also included carefully chosen supplementary material such as printed lyrics with tasks for a discussion, a list of possible expressions and cues available to help when the students got lost. Each of the activities also contained more controlled tasks as well as freer ones so that the students could smoothly develop their fluency when speaking. The most of the activities were adapted from the books written by Friederike Klippel *Keep Talking*, Tim Murphey *Music and Songs* and Cranmer and Laroy *Musical Openings*.

5.5. Evaluation of the project

The evaluation of the efficiency of the whole project consisted of two basic strategies which were realized during and after my teaching practice. The first one was critical reflections on the activities done during my teaching practice and the second was the final evaluation of the project.

Reflections and evaluations of the lessons

The reflections mainly focused on the analysis of the criteria set for the activity design. The main emphasis was put on the fact whether these activities were effective and really led to communication among the students. As regards the motivation of the students and their participation in the song-based communicative activities, my mentor helped me to observe the students' reactions in all the lessons.

Final evaluation

The outcomes that finally marked the success or failure of this teaching project were based on the final semi-structure interview with the students. The final debate was done at the end of my teaching practice and the students were allowed to express their feelings about the song-based activities. During this informal discussion, everybody had a chance to tell me what he/she thought about the song-based communicative activities. The students were asked what they liked or disliked about song-based activities, whether they enjoyed working in groups/pairs and whether the songs motivated them to communicate. The debate was also completely open to any new suggestions that would in whatever way improve the song-based communicative activities. The students were also allowed, if they did not want to express their opinions in the debate, to write their comments anonymously in small sheets of papers (see chapter 7.1. – Results of the debate). The debate was done in Czech so that the students could express their thoughts easily.

5.6. Teaching conditions

The project was conducted at the elementary school Smetanova in Chotěboř. This school is the biggest elementary school in Chotěboř and is attended by approximately 500 students. The students at this school start learning English already at the age of seven. These young learners attend two lessons a week and then at the age of nine or ten (fourth form) they have three lessons a week till the school leave at the ninth form. The school has awarded the 'Scio Certificate' which attests to the school participation in improving the quality of Czech education. The school offers good teaching conditions especially for the foreign language teacher as there is modern equipment in almost each of the language classrooms. The factor of modern equipment was also important for this project as the students could listen to a quality sound system provided by the means of an interactive board.

I had the opportunity to come back to this school where I had spent nine years of studying. I became the part-time teacher of English and History at this school at the beginning of the school year 2009-2010. The important fact to mention is that the most of the students involved in this project were the students whom I taught during or after my teaching practice. Therefore, the students knew my way of teaching and, of course, I could consequently easily adopt the activities to their level of English.

Finally, the lessons were taught in two classes, in VIII.B and IX.C. The students attending these classes had, according to the interviews with their teachers, only little experience with using songs in EFL lessons, so it was completely new experience for both them and me. The next chapter describes the class profiles in more details.

Class profiles

VIII.B

There were altogether eighteen students, six boys and twelve girls, in this class. As I had taught in this class several times, I could observe some interesting factors. The first was that I had never taught a class that would be as disciplined as this one. The point was that the teacher who had taught these students created the atmosphere which positively influenced the whole class management and led to discipline. The authority I had in this class was almost unbelievable. The VIII.B was not disruptive at all and if I wanted to keep my authority, I just raised my voice. As regards the level of English of these students, this class could be compared to IX.C. Their results in English were, according to my opinion, very good and even better than in IX.C. When I observed this class, I could notice, however, that several students lacked self-confidence. The problem occurred when these students were to, for example, express their opinions about something or sit for some exams. What happened was that I could see their hands shaking a little bit when writing a test and during some speaking activities their voice began to tremble and then they stopped talking. Despite of some problems with their self-confidence, all these students were willing to learn English and were able to cooperate among themselves, which was very important for developing the friendly atmosphere in this class.

IX.C

This class had seventeen students, eight boys and nine girls. Unlike VIII.B, this class had very individual differences in the actual level of English language. Four boys regularly got the worst marks and moreover, they completely refused to cooperate. They seemed not to care about their marks. On the other hand, they were not disturbing the lessons in terms of misbehaviour or regular disruption. The overall results of this class were average, only very few students were excellent. In comparison with VIII.B, these students did not have positive attitudes towards learning English. It was difficult to make them cooperate as this class worked rather individually and not as a group.

6. LESSON PLANS AND REFLECTIONS

6.1. Activity No.1 – Who are you? What do you like?

(adapted from: Friederike Klippel, 2005; David Norman et al., 1986)

Class: VIII.B

Number of the students: 18

Age of the students: 13

Goal: getting to know each other
raising awareness in the class
interviewing a colleague

Learning objectives: The students will be able to describe their colleagues' likes/dislikes.
The students will be able to make questions about their colleagues' opinions.
The students will be able to make questions about personal data.
The students will be able to exchange their opinions about music.

Purpose/Rationale: As this is the first lesson, the aim of the activities is to develop the teacher-student and the student-student 'interaction, communication and familiarization' within the whole class. The pre-activity is supposed to set a friendly and cooperative atmosphere so that the students can easily adapt to the next activity which is meant to make the students talk in pairs about their musical interests.

Lesson fit: This activity introduces the whole lesson and serves also as a kind of warming-up activity. In the next stages of the lesson, the students continue to work on exercises from their textbook. The language item they focus on is the revision of the present simple continuous.

Anticipated problem: As this is the first lesson, the students might be shy to cooperate and might make some minor grammar mistakes when interviewing their partners.

Thesis focus: The aim of the first lesson was to find out something about the students' interests in music, to make the students cooperate and talk about their interests.

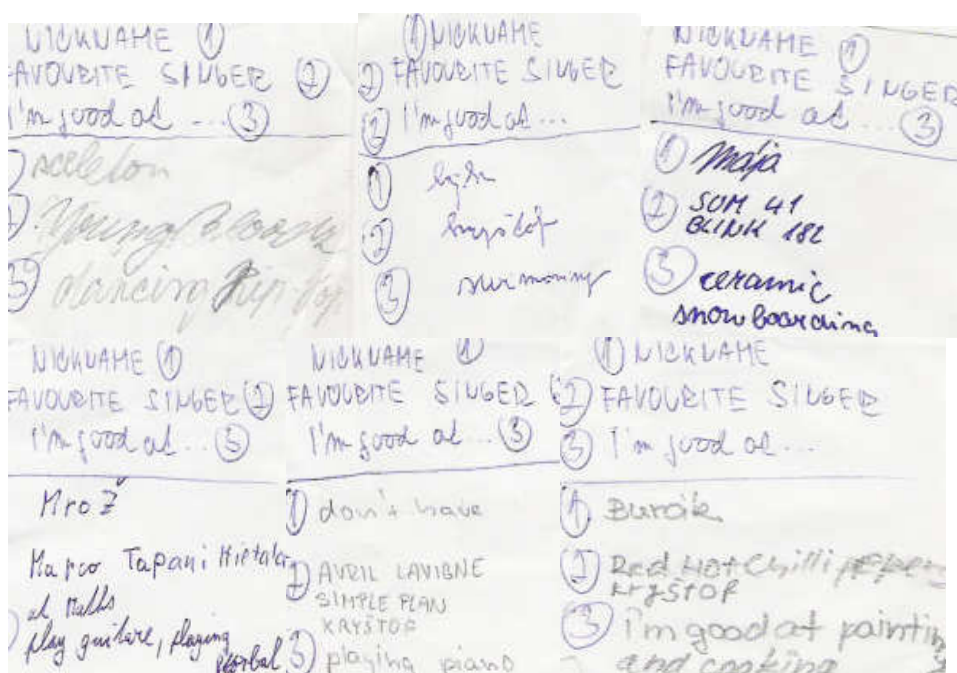
Materials: two types of 'identity cards - ID cards' (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.2)

Time: 25 minutes

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher introduces himself by telling the students some basic information about himself. Then, the students are encouraged to write their personal data on small ID cards. Three minutes later, the teacher collects these cards and invites somebody to read one of these cards aloud. The girl/boy then tells the class whose card it might be. Each of the students should get a chance to read one ID card so that everybody is involved in the activity. This activity is the important preparation for the next activity.

Some original copies of the students' ID cards



The teacher says: *Hello! My name is Oldřich Šimon and I am twenty-four years old. My hobbies are football, table tennis and playing the guitar. I have one sister, her name is Irena...And now, my nickname is...my favourite singer is...and I am good at...*

All right, and now, I want you to write something about you! Here is an ID card and you are to write down your nickname, your favourite singer/band and finally what you are good at. You have three minutes to do this...

OK! Thank you! (the teacher collects the cards). So, for instance, Peter, take one card and read aloud the information about a girl/boy, then try to guess whose card it is...

Aim: getting familiar with the students, raising awareness in the class, preparation for pair-work

Stage 2: The teacher asks the whole class some questions concerning listening to music. Then, he writes on the board a chart dealing with his opinions about music and explains to the students that they are to fill in the first part of the brief survey card with their musical interests. When they are finished, they are to ask their partner about his/her opinions about music and then they will record this information into the second part of the survey card. The teacher can finally ask one pair to tell the whole class about their outcomes of the interview (depends on time and willingness of the students...)

An original copy of the students' ID card

Firstly, fill in with your opinions (put a ☒ to show what kind of music you usually like, or usually do not like) then ask your colleague: Do you usually like...

I		Colleague	
like	don't like	likes	doesn't like
	✓		✓
✓			✓
✓			✓
✓		✓	
✓		✓	
✓		✓	
	✓		✓

Do you like listening rather to Czech or English songs? Ask your colleague!

I like rather English songs but some Czech. My colleague likes listening English songs

The teacher says: *Very well, now, tell me: Who likes listening to music?*

Do you play any musical instrument?

How long?...

OK. Thank you! Now, let me tell you something about my interests in music. I usually do not like classical music (the teacher writes a tick next to the statement about 'classical music' in the chart on the board) but I usually like listening to pop, rock and blues music...Now, please, pass these small ID cards about your interests in music. You are to complete this ID card and then, after 3 minutes, your partner you are sitting next to you will ask you about your interests and writes the answers into the next part of this card – so, as for the example, you will ask your colleague:

Do you usually like classical music?

...

Do you like Czech singers? Which one? Which one not?

The teacher writes two/or three possible questions on the blackboard.

Aim: practising making questions, exchanging information about the students' musical interests (what the students like/dislike)

Reflection: As this was my first lesson in this class, I did not expect that the activities would 'flow' so easily. However, the main aim was to set a friendly and cooperative atmosphere in the whole class. Therefore, the first pre-activity was important for several reasons. Firstly, this activity helped to reduce my and the students' nervousness as I could see on the students' faces a smile when they were to guess whose ID card it was. The fact that the students enjoyed the activity helped me to gain self-confidence. The first activity also helped me to keep the students' attention from the very beginning since not only I but also my mentor could see that when somebody was reading an ID card then everybody turned him/herself towards the speaker. The students were, according to my mentor, very curious about their colleagues' ID cards and mainly about their nicknames that were sometimes very funny for all the students. Another important factor was that everybody was involved in the activity, and that the class worked as one group listening to each other; moreover, everybody mentioned his/her favourite singer/band. This pre-activity made the students feel relaxed and motivated for the following pair-work communicative activity. The students were working with their partners sitting next to them. The teacher of this class also agreed with this form of grouping. She stated that the students mostly sat next to their

friends so it was very likely that the activity would work well. The students were to fill in other ID cards that investigated briefly their musical interests. Then, they were to ask their colleague about his/her interests and complete this ID card. As I was monitoring the class, I could see that everybody was working on completing his/her card. Just a few students (three or four students) switched into L1 when they were to ask their partners about their interests. I was wondering why they asked their colleagues in Czech since the instructions had been clearly demonstrated before and even in the card, the structure of the questions needed for interviewing their colleagues was quite clear to ask. In my opinion, there could be two reasons for this. Firstly, it was the last lesson for those students that day and therefore they wanted to do the task quickly. The second reason could be that they were eager to find out the answer. Nevertheless, I tried to encourage these students to speak in English, so I told them my answer in English and immediately asked a new question. As I could observe the class, a lot of students interviewed his/her colleague in English and even continued to talk about their favourite band little further (even though partly in Czech). I really appreciated these moments when the students kept talking about their favourite bands. These moments made me feel that the theme was motivating and familiar for the students and that they wanted to discuss it. Finally, this activity also showed another interesting factor. I deliberately included in this activity a question about the students' interests in Czech music. The point was that I expected that these students would rarely listen to Czech bands. However, even in the first activity the students (at least seven students) mentioned one Czech pop group – Kryštof. That these students are partly interested in Czech music made me think about including an activity based on a Czech songs in some of the following lessons.

Conclusion: The kinds of communicative activities when students are talking about their interests via ID cards or when they need to find out their colleague's opinion always include a kind of a 'gap' and therefore students have the purpose to communicate. The fact is that the activities I decided to choose did not lead to freer communication among the students but it was not the aim. The aim was to approach smoothly towards expressing one's ideas about something through controlled activities. These activities also showed that these students are interested in music, have their favourite singers/bands and that music, generally, may represent a worth topic to be discussed in the next lessons. The first lesson also contributed to create a friendly yet working atmosphere that helped to reduce nervousness between the teacher and the students.

6.2. Activity No.2 – “*Tak nějak málo tančím*” by Kryštof

Class: VIII.B

Number of the students: 18

Age of the students: 13

Goal: to make the students feel relaxed

to revise some vocabulary needed for the song

to inspire the students to discuss in groups their musical interests

Learning objectives: The students will be able to use the revised words in a group discussion.

The students will be able to express their ideas about musical interest.

Purpose/Rationale: As many of these students mentioned in some of the previous lessons that they are also interested in Czech music (although they preferred mostly English songs), the purpose of this activity is to find out whether they would accept a Czech song in EFL classes and moreover, whether this type of songs can make the students be motivated.

Lesson fit: This is the last activity of the lesson. As the activities before were aimed to practise reading skills, the song is aimed to relax the students and change the task from reading to speaking.

Anticipated problem: As this is the first lesson when the students will be exposed to the Czech song, the reactions of the students might be very different.

Thesis focus: A variety of songs may represent a motivating tool in EFL classes. Therefore, for this purpose, the students will be exposed to the Czech song that is supposed to be close to them.

Materials: worksheets with the gapped song lyrics (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.3), a list of possible speech acts (see appendix No.1), pictures with musical instruments (see appendix No.7), a guitar, stickers

Time: 20 min

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher tells the students that they will work in groups and their tasks will be to think about several questions concerning the Czech band Kryštof. Then, the teacher divides the students into several groups.

The teacher says: *All right! Now, close your textbooks, you will need just your heads. You will work in groups and you will discuss one song. You will get the lyrics of the song with some tasks to discuss. There will be one person in each group who will record (write down) all your ideas and opinions. This person will firstly read the question aloud and then all of you will think about the answer. You don't have to write, for example, that Lucka said that the song was boring but just write 'boring'.*

Please, try to communicate in English. If you do not know the vocabulary, try to ask your colleagues in your group or me when I am near. Remember, that there are no grammar mistakes when you communicate, just say what you think! There is also the list of speech acts you can use when you do not know how to say something.

(This list of possible speech acts is already known for the students. The students got familiar with it in previous lessons when the teacher explained the acts in Czech and the students wrote the translation down to the list. The teacher can ask the students for some expressions from the list at the beginning of any communicative activity – this is for practising the speech acts. Everybody got their own copy; however the teacher may distribute these lists again if necessary.)

OK! Each of you will get a picture with a musical instrument on it. You are to make groups according to these musical instruments. So, if you get the guitar, your partners have to

have the guitars too (the teacher distributes randomly the pictures). Then, when you make groups, sit together. So, go for it and try to make groups!

...

Now, decide, who will write down all your ideas (the teacher waits for one or two minutes). Very well! Here is the worksheet with the lyrics of the song we will discuss (the teacher distributes the lyrics, at least two per a group). Now, look at the paper. The questions are divided into several parts. Try to think about the first part, write down your opinions. You have five minutes to discuss the first part!

(the teacher monitors the class, provides help if needed, encourages the students to communicate in English...)

Aim: to get familiar with the song, pre-listening tasks to discuss

Stage 2: The students are to listen to the song (the teacher plays and sings the song), do and complete while listening and then post listening tasks. Finally, the students stick the papers with their results of the debate on the board. The students are at the end of the lesson allowed to come to the board and read their colleagues' suggestions.

The teacher says: *Fine! Thank you for your ideas! Now, you will be listening to the song by Kryštof. Your first task is to complete the lyrics with English translation of the missing words – so, if there is missing 'tančím' you will translate it as...(the teacher asks somebody in the class to demonstrate the task). Then, you find at least five key words that best characterize this song – so, it can be, for example, 'to dance, to kiss, a man who is over thirty...'. Then, you will try to discuss the questions:*

Do you prefer recorded or live music?

Do you like when your teacher sings a song? Why?

When you are finished, try to stick the paper with your results of the debate on the board! Try to write just some key words of your debate in that paper. I will help you to express your ideas if you are lost...

Aim: practising translation, working with the lyrics, talking about the live music, exchanging opinions, getting feedback from the group work

Kryštof - Tak nějak málo tančím

1)

Všem strunám řeky toužím být kon ^{tone}
všem okapovým loužím jejich břeh,
signálu antén sklon obřech ¹⁰⁰⁰
a pustit uzdu kormidlům ¹⁰⁰⁰

2)

Aspoň potápěčem v houfu se stát,
chytit svoji vlnku s ní pral ¹⁰⁰⁰
s krabičky mýdla mít vor
a sjíždět vanu ¹⁰⁰⁰ bez závor.

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, líbám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti more than thirty ⁺³⁰

3)

A v umyvadle ¹⁰⁰⁰ tůni chci mít, ¹⁰⁰⁰
v solničkách zas vůni majáků,
ze starých školních pijáků
postavit záchranný člun.

4)

A velrybu ladně v dlani skrýt
a hloubku moře na dně talířů,
ve skafandru s halířů
vyrazit v ten právný směr ^{right?}

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, líbám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti přes třicet.

5)

Tak nějak málo tančím ¹⁰⁰⁰ ^{dance}
Tak nějak málo líbám ¹⁰⁰⁰ ^{love}
Tak nějak málo brečím ¹⁰⁰⁰ ^{cry}
Tak nějak málo zpívám ¹⁰⁰⁰ ^{sing}

1) What do you know about the Czech band "KRYŠTOF" (How many members? Any front man? The musical genre?...)

FRONTMAN IS RICHARD ¹⁰⁰⁰
more than 5 members ¹⁰⁰⁰
more than 3 slow song ¹⁰⁰⁰
for girls but some are good

2 a) Try to agree on five key words of the lyrics!

We think song is about
WATER (basin, boat)
+ KORMIDLO
kormidlo - moon
song

b) Try to tell your colleagues why...

Do you prefer recorded or live music?

Do you like when your teacher sings a song? Why?

everybody likes
LIVE MUSIC
↓
enjoying LIVE

Every teacher in
classroom
should sing :-)-:-)
We liked it!!!!

Reflection: This activity was a completely new experience for all the students. It was not new in its content but in the way the activity was realized. It was quite surprising for the students to find out that they would finally do a task which is connected to the Czech song. This was something they were not accustomed to. From the first moment I came to this class with the guitar, the students were wondering expectantly what was going to happen and kept asking me from the beginning of the lesson what they would be doing. However, not all the students were excited at the beginning that they were going to talk about the Czech band Kryštof, so they did not firstly cooperate in the group (they said boringly that they do not like the front man of this group). However, despite the fact that some of the students were not happy with this band, I appreciated that they told their opinions to their colleagues. I expected that not everybody would be a fan of this band; however, I finally realized that it was not the point since the students got a chance to tell their opinions and therefore this activity had a kind of a ‘curiosity gap’. On the other hand, I expected some problems when the students were to make groups, however, there was not a single student who had made a complaint. The second stage of the activity was quite interesting to observe. According to the mentor, the students liked their teacher playing the guitar and therefore it helped to create non-threatening atmosphere that contributed to the fact that the students were motivated to work in their groups. As regards the whole communication within the groups, it varied a lot. Sometimes the questions I set led to further communication among the students, especially when I asked them if they liked me singing. One group even agreed that in every lesson a teacher should sing, which made the most of the students laugh when they read it during the final stage of the activity on the board. Nevertheless, the debate in one group was quite short and I think the reason was that some of the students just said “yes” or “no” and that was the end of the whole communication and they were not eager to talk anymore. However, the song itself, the task (missing information) and the questions required from the students a kind of communication. The last stage of the activity was quite interesting for everybody since the students could see what their colleagues were thinking about. Everybody read at least one paper of another group. It was a pity that we couldn’t reflect on those final results of the debate little further since there was no time to do it. Therefore, I decided to leave those papers in the class and stick them on the wall so that each of the students could read them.

Conclusion: Not only foreign language songs can be used in EFL classes in order to motivate students. This lesson indicated that even songs in the students' native language can represent an interesting starting point for a following work. Nevertheless, any song can bring a great diversity of reactions because each of us has different musical taste. This diversity of reactions, which songs provide, can represent a kind of 'curiosity gap', which might be a reason and a stimulus for a discussion among students. However, it proved that the task must be meaningful for the students and thus can lead to expressing one's opinion.

6.3. Activity No. 3 – “*Elizabethan Serenade*” by Ronald Binge

(questions for discussion adapted from: David Cranmer and Clement Laroy, 1986)

Class: IX.C

Number of the students: 17

Age of the students: 14

Goal: to relax the students

to provide cross-curricular overlap through a song

to encourage the students to talk about moods and states of mind

to help the students to know each other better

Learning objectives: The students will be able to describe in key words the Elizabethan era.

The students will be able to ask for their partner’s opinions.

The students will be able to exchange their opinions about music.

Purpose/Rationale: Although most of the students do not like classical music, (they expressed their dislikes in some of the previous lessons) the students may at least accept classical music as one of the factor that is connected with history and therefore is worth talking about.

Lesson fit: This is the last activity of the lesson. As the activities before aimed to practise cultural awareness (‘Heroes and heroines in Britain’), the song is aimed to continue with a similar theme in a relaxed way and focus on expressing the students’ opinions about classical music. This activity is also a partial follow-up to a history lesson the students had last week.

Anticipated problem: The students might be hesitating when discussing their feelings about classical music.

Thesis focus: This musical composition was not only used as a stimulus for expressing the students' states of minds but also for better understanding the cultural value of Great Britain.

Materials: the interactive board (or an overhead projector with a CD player), the CD with the *Elizabethan serenade*, a list of speech acts (see appendix No.1), stickers, worksheets with the silhouette of a woman and with the tasks to be discussed (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.4)

Time: 20 min

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The students are to close their textbooks and recall as many aspects of the Elizabethan era as possible. As they had already talked about this topic during their history lessons, they are expected to elicit quite many aspects of this era. The students are encouraged to express their ideas in English but if they do not know, they are allowed to tell their ideas in Czech. The teacher writes their suggestions on the board (the teacher can translate some Czech suggestions into English since the students are not expected to know the right vocabulary). Then, the teacher displays on the board the vocabulary and some speech acts (see appendix No.1) which can be used by the students when describing the mood evoked by a song (this list is already known to the students, this is for practising the speech acts).

The teacher says: *Fine! Close your books! Now, we will try to make the rest of the lesson a bit different. Tell me anything you can remember of the Elizabethan era! Try to express your ideas in English! Try to say it with the words you know! If you do not know, you can say it in Czech!*

(the teacher helps the students to recall some aspects of the Elizabethan era by the following questions)

Why do we call it also the Shakespearian era?

Who was Shakespeare? What was his profession? In which century was he born?

Who was the queen in this era? Was she famous?

...

What kind of music, do you think, was typical for this period? Was it hip-hop music?

Would you like to listen to music typical for that period? Why? Why not?

...

All right! Thank you! Now, imagine you are listening to the song you like. What feelings do you have? Tell me! If you do not know the vocabulary, tell me in Czech! (the teacher possibly helps the students and writes on the board: feelings of: nostalgia, sorrow, melancholy, joy, happiness...)

All right! Here are some useful vocabulary you already know! (the teacher displays the list of possible speech acts on the board).

Aim: tuning the students in, recalling some information about Shakespeare and his era, preparation for communication about classical music

Stage 2: The teacher tells the students that they will listen in groups to a piece of classical music. The teacher then explains that this song was written for Queen Elizabeth the First and that this music is celebrating not only her but also her era in general. The task for the students will be to describe this music and to draw a possible picture of the woman for whom this music was composed (it is not necessary to draw a picture, the students can describe the person by some key words). Then, the teacher puts the students into groups and lets them decide who the secretary in each of the group will be. The secretary will write down the students' suggestions. Finally, the teacher displays on the board the silhouette of a woman and the list of possible speech acts (the students have the silhouette and the list of the speech acts also in each of the groups).

The teacher says: *Now, you will be listening to some classical piece of music. This song was composed for Queen Elizabeth the First who lived in the sixteenth century...Now, you will be working in groups, so as you sit, turn to your colleague sitting behind you and you make groups of four* (this way of grouping depends on the teacher's decision; as there are seventeen students, a group of three is possible). *So, in each of the groups there will one secretary who will read the questions after the listening and then will write down your opinions about the song. There are two questions to discuss:*

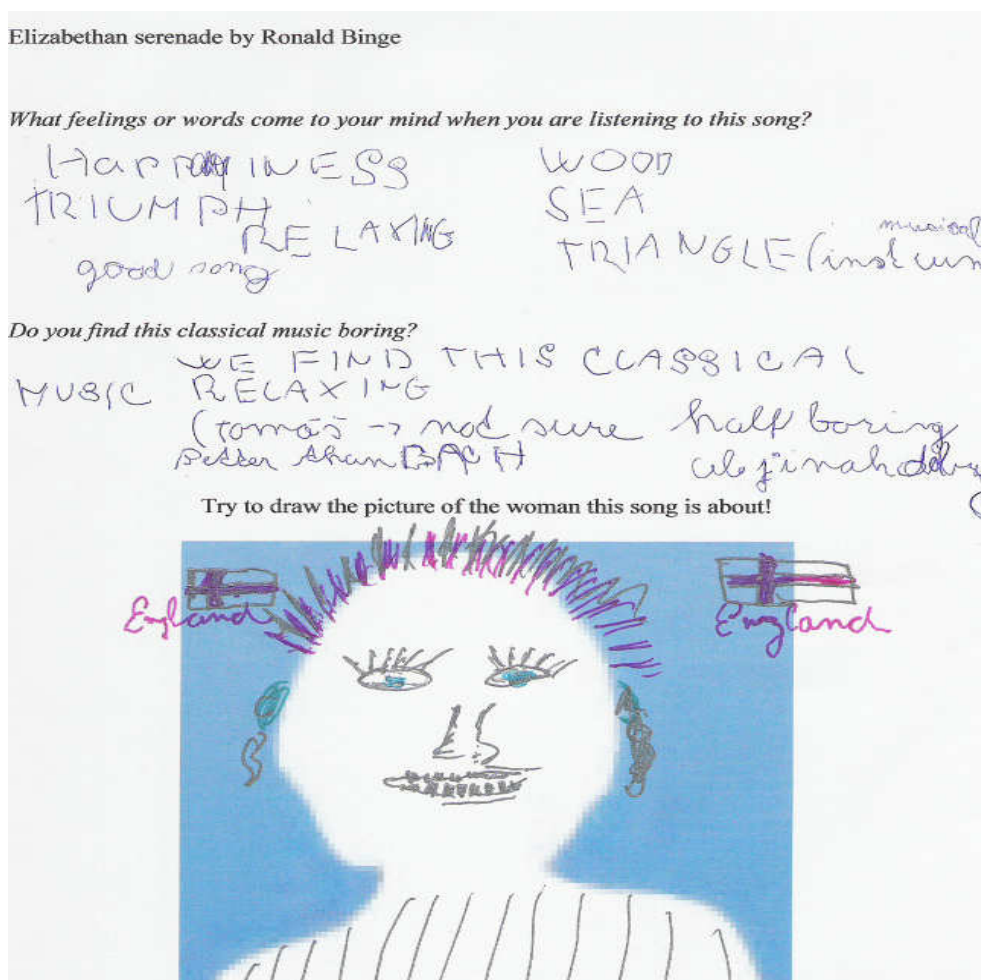
What feelings or words come to your mind when you are listening to this song?

Do you find this classical music boring?

When you write down some of your ideas, all the members of the group will try to draw a picture. As you can see, there is one silhouette on the board (the teacher displays the silhouette of a woman) and you are to draw a real picture of this woman – so use your pens, pencils and try to colour the picture of this woman. You can also describe this woman! –She is tall, old... When you are finished, stick your picture on the board! And finally, try to talk in English as much as possible! You can take a look on the board, or into the list of speech acts. If you do your best and still do not know the vocabulary, say it in Czech!

Aim: stimulating the students' suggestions about classical music, cooperation among the students in groups, make the students speak about their ideas

An original copy of the students' paper



Stage 3: At this stage, all the students are invited to come to the board and stick the paper with their suggestions on the board. The teacher finally invites all the students to look at their colleagues' suggestions.

The teacher says: *OK! Thank you very much for all your ideas! Now, try to come to the board and stick your papers on it!*

...

Now, everybody, come to the board and look at your colleagues' suggestions! (the teacher possibly invites the students to read especially some suggestions – depends on the situation and time).

Aim: providing feedback for the students and the teacher, evaluation of the activity

Reflection: Despite the fact that I am not a fan of classical music, I decided to take this type of music in the lesson. The main reason why I decided to do that was that it was a good opportunity to connect this music with the topic of a regular English lesson. Although it was obvious that the students were not surprised when they noticed that they would be listening to a piece of classical music during their English lesson, I was convinced that especially in this case the *Elizabethan serenade* would fit quite well. I began the activity with asking the students what they can remember from the Elizabethan era. The fact was that this was mainly about translation some English vocabulary into Czech since the students were not able (or rather were not motivated) to translate their suggestions into English. They could remember who Shakespeare was, but when I asked them what they know about the Elizabethan era then just one or two students were able to answer. It might have been rather too complicated general question for them. Therefore, I tried to help them with concrete questions and then the students were able to come up with some ideas. The way that the students made groups (just by turning back to their colleagues) was quite fast and I did not notice (nor the mentor did) that the students made a complaint against the colleagues they had to cooperate with. I think this was mainly due to the fact that the students were sitting close to their friends and especially, that all the boys were sitting at one row so they appreciated that they would work together. It was obvious for me that some boys would not do the task and would do just anything else. Therefore, I had told

them that I would be pleased if they at least tried to communicate about the song in Czech since it would be better than doing nothing. To my surprise, these boys tried to do their best, expressed their opinions to their colleagues and answered all the tasks in English . During the listening to the *Elizabethan serenade*, the students looked quite interested and most of them, as they were discussing their feelings after the song, even said that this piece of music is quite nice and relaxing and that they did not find it boring since its melody is very exciting. I appreciated that some of the students used the list of speech acts when they were to express their feelings. Although the students rather enjoyed drawing a possible picture of the woman, I think, that this piece of activity helped the students to work as a group. As regards the last stage when the students were to come to the board and see what their colleagues did, the students mostly enjoyed all those drawings which became very funny for them.

Evaluation: This lesson showed that even classical music can stand as a useful prompt to communication in EFL classes. The teacher has to, however, choose the music very carefully as the theme of the classical music has to be simple to understand. There are many pieces of classical music when a listener, if he/she is not a professional musician, gets lost in a variety of different parts of the music. The *Elizabethan serenade* is the piece of classical music that has quite a simple theme which is repeated from the beginning till the end of the song. Moreover, the whole serenade is not so long (it is about four minutes long) and its melody is quite catchy. All these factors contributed to the fact that this kind of classical music can stand as a possible stimulus for communication among the students.

6.4. Activity No.4 – “*Tears in Heaven*” by Eric Clapton

Class: IX. C

Number of the students: 17

Age of the students: 14

Goal: to revise the grammatical construction would – if
to stimulate communication in pair-work
to help the students to understand the way the lyrics carry meaning
to develop intensive listening skills

Learning objectives: The students will be able to understand the meaning of the lyrics.
The students will be able to express their ideas to their colleagues.
The students will be able to use grammatical construction would-if.

Purpose/Rationale: As this lesson should be devoted to working mainly with the impression of a song and developing the students’ ability to describe their feelings, I decided to choose the song that carries the impressive lyrics. This song with its story should therefore be quite an interesting topic for a possible discussion among the students.

Lesson fit: The preceding activities were aimed to develop writing skills as the students were describing their cities. Therefore, this song is aimed mainly to change the task from writing to speaking.

Anticipated problem: The students may not understand the lyrics, problems with timing.

Thesis focus: Main attention will be paid on the melody of the song which accompanies the lyrics. Together with the lyrics, the melody stands for an interesting theme for a communicative activity in EFL classes.

Materials: worksheets with the song *Tears in Heaven* (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.5), the CD

Time: 25 minutes

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The students are asked whether they prefer lyrics or melodies when listening to songs. The students are divided into pairs, they are given the lyrics of the song *Tears in Heaven* with an either/or choice for certain words in the lyrics. The students are asked to choose which word is more suitable for each of the gaps. If the students do not know the vocabulary, they are allowed to ask the teacher. Then, the students listen to the song for the first time. The whole class checking follows.

The teacher says: *Now, tell me, when you are listening to songs, do you prefer lyrics or melodies? Which song has more interesting melody than the lyrics for you?...*

Now, let's think about one song. As you sit, make pairs with your colleague sitting next to you. Pass these handouts with the lyrics of the song and try to think with your partner which word fits better in those lines (the teacher can demonstrate the task by giving one example). When you are finished, we will listen to this song just once and then we'll check your suggestions...

Aim: to familiarize the students with the song, tuning in the activity

Stage 2: The students are to read in pairs the whole lyrics with the right words and then answer the question who they think the song is about. Then, they are to think about another strophe (at least two lines) with the use of construction 'would – if'. The students after several minutes are asked for suggested answers (or the teacher can just monitor the class and write some of those suggestions on the board).

The teacher says: *All right! Now, you will read the lyrics again, with the right words. When you are finished, I would like you to think about the question: Who the song is about? Is it*

about animals, or...? And the second task is to think about another brief strophe with 'would – if' construction. So, before you start, can you translate the first two lines? (the teacher asks randomly in order to make sure that the students understand this construction which should not be new for them) So, as for the example, look at the board. My strophe is "would you stay with me if I saw you in heaven" ...Now, read the lyrics again and then try to think about the tasks with your partner! I will be near to help you! (The teacher can write some of the students' suggestions on the board and translate them)

Aim: to practice would–if construction, to give the students an opportunity to express themselves in pairs

Stage 3: The teacher tells the students a brief story about the musician who wrote this song. Then, the teacher writes some key words of the story on the board. The teacher asks the students to listen to the song for the last time and to think about the passages in the lyrics which can be connected with the key words of the musician life. The students can also describe their feelings during the song; this is deliberately done after the second listening when the students already know the story about the author. Finally, the students are asked to think about any similar song to this or about the song which carries similar impressive story.

The teacher says: *Well! Now, listen to the story of one musician. He was born in 1939 as a child who did not know his mother. He was brought up by his granny and grandpa. When he was ten years old, he got his first guitar and soon he was quite good at playing it. He soon became very famous. But soon, his life began to go down slowly. He started to take drugs that he was not able to control himself...In 1991, when he wanted to visit his only son Connor, something terrible happened. His only son was killed in a fall...* (the teacher writes on the board some key words as: drugs, a son, death, grief, hard life...)

Now, you will listen to the song once again and after that you will work with your partner. Your task is 3a and 3b, so, firstly, you connect the words 'a son', 'hard life', 'grief' to the words or lines in the lyrics. So, write, for example, the word 'grief' next the line you think is somehow connected to 'grief'. Then, try to describe this song and try to think about the song which is similar to this one or which is impressive/powerful for you. Work with your

partner and discuss these tasks! Try to use the expressions from the list of speech acts when you are describing the song. I will be near to help you...

Aim: to show how the lyrics carry the meaning, to inspire the students to discuss

An original copy of the students' paper

<p><u>Tears in Heaven by Eric Clapton</u></p> <p><u>Would/Will</u> you know my name A SON If I saw you in heaven? Would it be the <u>same/sin</u> If I saw you in heaven? I must be <u>strong/wrong</u> and carry on 'Cause I know I don't belong HARD LIFE Here in heaven</p> <p>Would you hold my <u>had/hand</u> If I saw you in heaven? Would you help me <u>stand/pray</u> If I saw you in heaven? I'll find my <u>home/way</u> through night and day 'Cause I know I just can't stay Here in heaven</p> <p>Time can bring you down GRIEF Time can bend your knee Time can break your <u>hand/heart</u> Have you begging please Begging please</p> <p>(instrumental bridge)</p> <p>Beyond the door There's peace I'm sure And I know there'll be no more Tears in heaven</p>	<p><u>Discuss with your partner!</u></p> <p>1) Which word fits better (Would or Will? Same or sin?...)</p> <p>2a) Who the song is about (Do you think that the song is about e.g. animals? Or about any people? Or...?)</p> <p>b) Try to think about another strophe with would/if construction!</p> <p>3a) Try to connect the following words to any part in the lyrics! (a son, hard life, grief)</p> <p>b) Do you know any song which has the powerful lyrics/story for you?</p> <p>2a) WE THINK THIS SONG IS ABOUT PEOPLE NOT ABOUT ANIMALS</p> <p>2b) WOULD YOU BE MY SON AGAIN IF I SAW YOU IN HEAVEN...</p> <p>3b) APRIL LAVIGNE</p> <p>ENRIQUE IGLESIAS - HERO</p> <p>ATOMIC KITTENS - CLOSE YOUR EYES</p>
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Reflection: To begin with, this was the activity I had thought about many times before I realized it. I knew that there existed several activity books dealing with this song in many ways; however, it was used mainly for practising the grammatical construction 'would – if'. It is important to mention, that especially this song can be used in EFL classes in several different ways. It can be worked just with the melody of the song, nevertheless it would had been very time demanding and rather appropriate for some after-lesson activities. Therefore, I decided to work mainly with the circumstances under which the

song was written and I think that the students got the point. The either/or choice activity, which is not new when dealing with the lyrics in EFL classes, was done at the beginning of the whole activity and I think it helped the students to understand the core idea of the lyrics. However, I wanted everybody to understand the idea of the song and therefore I decided, before the second stage of the activity, to translate the lyrics since there were students who seemed to be a bit confused with the lyrics. On the other hand, the translation of the lyrics was quite useful since it helped some students to think more deeply about the question who the song was written for. As I was observing the class, all the students had some suggestions, even those students who were weaker in English. That these students at least tried to think about this question made me feel that this activity was worth doing it. As regards the task dealing with ‘would-if’ construction, some students created quite good constructions as “Would you be my son again if I saw you in heaven” or “Would you come back home with me if you had a chance to do it”. The last activity showed that most of the students thought about this song seriously as most of them were able to explain which line, for example, went with the word ‘grief’ or ‘hard life’. Especially during this stage, I asked my mentor to go around the class with me and observe the cooperation of the students. The truth was that a half of them were discussing in Czech, however, some students used expressions as “I think it goes with” or “In my opinion...”. I was happy that the students tried to describe their feelings about the song and that most of them came up with some names of songs which have impressive lyrics or melodies for them. In this case, the students tried to communicate among themselves and they exchanged their opinions about some songs.

Conclusion: The song *Tears in Heaven* is mostly used in EFL classes for teaching the grammatical construction ‘would-if’. However, the song can be worked with in many different ways. This lesson indicated not only some other ways the song can be used in EFL classes but also some useful suggestions when the teacher wants to use this song. The first suggestion is that it would be useful to deal with the song for the whole lesson since 25 minutes is quite a short time and some of the students needed to have more time to express their thoughts and think of the song more deeply. Moreover, if the teacher wants the students to understand the ‘message’ of the song, to complete the tasks and to discuss the song, then it is very important to prepare the students for it. Another important aspect to remember is that the teacher should be always aware of the fact whether all the students

understand the lyrics. If some of the students do not understand the lyrics, then they can easily lose their concentration and become de-motivated for the rest of the lesson. As the students in this lesson understood the meaning of the lyrics, they could easily associate this meaning with the melody of the song. Therefore, the students could understand the whole ‘message’ of the song, which contributed to the fact that they were able to express their feelings and ideas to their colleagues.

6.5. Activity No.5 – “*Nobody Knows You*” by Eric Clapton (originally by Bessie Smith)

Class: XIII. B

Number of the students: 16

Age of the students: 14

Goal: to revise the usage of the past simple
to relax the students
to develop the student’s listening skills
to motivate the students through the live song in a follow-up pair-work discussion

Learning objectives: The students will be able to use the past simple construction.
The students will be able to understand the meaning of the lyrics.
The students will be inspired to express their ideas about the song.

Purpose/Rationale: The purpose of this activity is mainly to motivate the students (through the live song played by the teacher), to revise the usage of the past simple and to talk about the song in a further discussion in pairs.

Lesson fit: The previous activities dealt with the revision of the past simple and practising reading skills. Therefore, as a lesson closure, the students will listen to the teacher who will end up the lesson with the song played on his own in order to make them use the past simple in a relaxed way.

Anticipated problem: The students may react differently as this is the blues song, they may also refuse to cooperate.

Thesis focus: The song was used in order to revise some grammatical patterns and as a follow-up topic for a discussion.

Materials: A guitar, worksheets with the gapped lyrics of the song *Nobody Knows You* (for a sample worksheet see appendix No.6; the lyrics were modified as the original version was longer and more complicated for the 8th form students), the pictures with musical instruments to group the students (see appendix No.7)

Time: 20 minutes

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: The teacher tells the students some information about the author.

The teacher says: *All right! Now, I will play a song for you, but before I will do it, let me tell you something about the author of this song. The author is a man who was born in 1939. He was brought up by his grandmother and grandfather. He began to play the guitar and soon he became very famous. However, then he started to drink too much of alcohol...* (during this speech the teacher writes some key words of the story on the board - a guitarist, famous, alcohol...then, the teacher checks whether everybody understands these words by asking the students for translation)

Aim: pre-listening activity, getting familiar with the singer

Stage 2: The students listen to the song and fill in the gaps the missing words in the past simple. The teacher plays the song by himself for the first time. The whole class checking follows.

The teacher says: *Well, now, pass these lyrics. You are to listen to the song and just fill in the gaps. The missing words are verbs in the past simple.*

...

OK! Thank you for the listening! Now, read the first line... (the teacher asks randomly the whole class, the teacher can write the verbs on the board)

Aim: filling in the gaps with the verbs in the past tense, getting familiar with the song

Stage 3: The students are divided into pairs. Each pair is given some questions to be discussed. The teacher asks somebody to read the questions and somebody to translate them. Then, the teacher tells the students that they are to listen again to the same song and then that they are to answer the questions. Finally, the teacher possibly writes some of the students' suggestions on the board (depends on time).

The teacher says: *Well done! Now, each of you will get either the picture of a guitar or the picture of drums, a piano, a violin, a harp, a banjo, a clarinet, a trumpet. So, find somebody, who shares the same picture as you!*

...

Thank you! Now, you will listen to me once again. I want you to listen carefully and when the song is over, you will discuss with your partner the following questions:

Do you think that Eric had a really hard life? Why?

Why did Eric lose all his friends?

Did you like the song?

What is the musical genre of the song? (pop, country, jazz...)

Imagine that you have a million pounds. What will you buy?

So, now, listen carefully, you can close your eyes, listen to the melody of the song, listen to the refrain... Well, let's start...

(The teacher plays the song, then the teacher monitors the class, provides any help, possibly encourages the students to talk by telling them his suggestions. As the final conclusion the teacher can write some of the students' suggestions on the board.)

Aim: post-listening discussion among the students

Reflection: Firstly, as the whole lesson was from the beginning based on the revision of the past simple, the students appreciated that another activity was a bit different. I could see on the students' faces the moment of surprise as I told them that it would be me who would play a song for them. It was the aim to include in this lesson a song-based activity. I expected the students to appreciate this, and I was right. I decided to choose the song

which I knew very well and which seemed to be quite easy as regards the theme and the difficultness of the lyrics. The first stage of this activity indicated that the students became hooked in as all of them were looking at me and listening to the story of the singer (I used the same procedure as in IX.C; see activity No.4). It was useful that I wrote some of the key words of this brief story on the board, since this helped to keep the students' attention and, in my opinion, it made them be involved deeply in the story. When I asked the students to make pairs, the whole class became a bit chaotic. The point was that some of the boys were quite confused that they had to cooperate with the girls. I think that this is the main disadvantage of making pairs just by chance with the help of some cards or, as in this case, with the help of the pictures of the musical instruments. However, this way of grouping was the part of the plan, so I encouraged these students to work together since it would be useful for them if they helped each other. The fact was that after my first playing, these students calmed down and they seemed to be concentrated on the activity. The students did not have any serious problems with filling in the gaps with the verbs in the past simple (it was not aimed to be difficult). As regards the follow-up activity, when the students were to discuss, all of them cooperated quite well and I did not observe (nor my mentor did) any students who would have refused to talk to his/her colleague. This was a very positive moment of the activity. I was wondering whether the students would accept this blues song since their musical tastes are quite different. However, I was delighted and bit surprised by their reactions as none of them was pulling his/her face during listening to the song. I think that the students were hooked in the live song. After the activity, I was told by my mentor that the students are not used to seeing a teacher playing any song during a regular English lesson and therefore it is always quite pleasant and interesting for everybody in the class. The question is how much that live playing contributed to the students' enthusiasm to take a part in the following discussion with their colleagues. I believe that it (at least a bit) contributed to the fact that the students got relaxed. I can evaluate the follow-up discussion among pairs as successful since the students, according to my observation, tried to express their opinions; however, in some cases their debate ended in saying just one or two words. The reason for this could be that the students would have had the same problems even in Czech because this was about thinking. Despite the fact that some of the students expressed their ideas in one word, I managed to write some of those ideas on the board. Then, I chose one answer, for example the statement of a boy who told me that the author of the song had a really hard life because he lost all his good

friends, and I asked another girl if she agreed with his statement. Finally, I also told the students my opinions about the song and I think this whole agreeing or disagreeing, which had not been planned, helped to conclude the whole lesson in a useful way for everybody.

Conclusion: The teacher can make any song very fruitful for EFL classes. This was proved in this lesson since the students were motivated to talk. They were stimulated to talk through the live music. This music helped the students feel relaxed and therefore self-confidently to tell their opinions to their colleagues. The students answered all the tasks and really tried to express their opinions in English. This lesson showed one important aspect which indicates the big advantage of live music in EFL classes. Therefore, the teacher who can play the guitar should try to take this instrument to the lesson since this is something that can make the atmosphere in the class very friendly. Finally, it was proved that when preparing the students for the following work with the song, it is very useful to tell the students some interesting facts about the author or the song as it helps them to get into the song more deeply and therefore to understand the meaning of the song better.

7. Evaluation of the project

As the thesis of this Professional Project was based upon the idea that songs can stand for an effective incentive to encourage communication among students and therefore contribute to the development of students' speaking skills, the Professional Project was conducted to validate the rightness of this thesis and to answer the following questions:

Can songs stimulate students' willingness to express their ideas?

Can songs stand for a good starting point to communication?

Can songs provide opportunities for creating information (opinion) gaps?

To obtain the results that would validate the hypothesis and help to answer the above stated questions, the conclusions mentioned in the reflections will be discussed in light with the theory and compared with the conclusions drawn from the debate with the students.

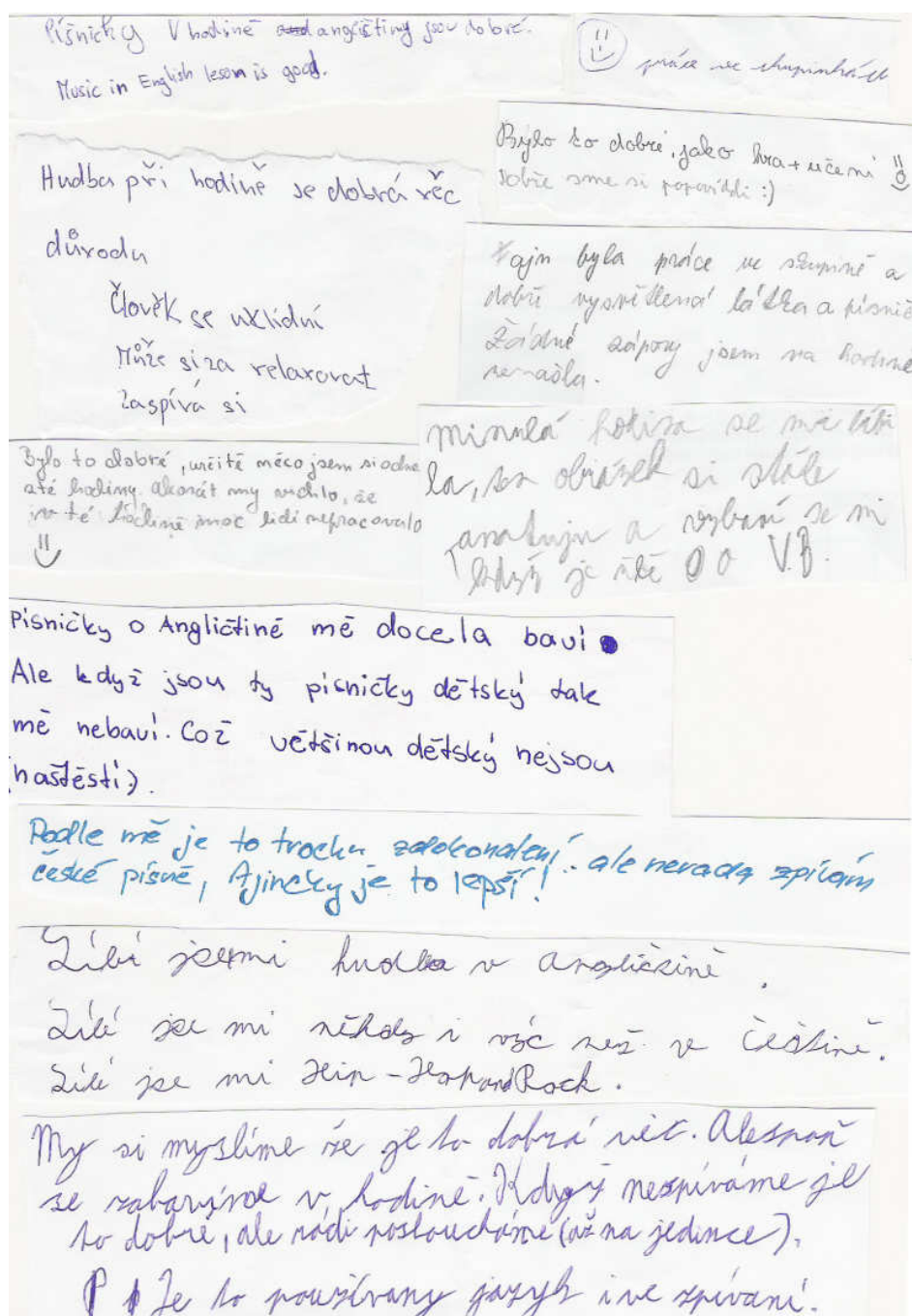
7.1. Results of the debate

"Songs ... give us the external cover we need to feel more secure while at the same time providing the internal support to carry on with the task"
[Griffie, 1992: 4].

The debate with the students was based on the semi-structured interview that was conducted at the end of my teaching practice. The aim was to prove or disprove the fact that songs can stand as an effective tool to motivate students. The interview with the students also helped to evaluate the final effect of the project. As the results of the debates in both classes did not differ too much from each other, the following chapter will discuss all the outcomes together. The students were asked what they liked or disliked about the song-based activities, whether they enjoyed working in groups/pairs and whether the songs motivated them to communicate. The students were also invited to come up with any suggestions about song-based communicative activities. The debate was about twenty

minutes long in both final classes and everybody got a chance, if he/she did not want to participate in the discussion, to express his/her opinions anonymously in small sheets of paper.

Some of the students' opinions



When I asked the students if they liked incorporating the songs to their regular English lessons, all the students answered that they liked this idea. In both classes, the students agreed that they liked the variety of songs and mainly the possibility to work also with the Czech song, which was completely a new experience for them. One of them even said that the activities were like ‘playing’ and ‘learning’. When I asked the students which of those songs they did not like, there was not a single student who had a complaint. This fact was a bit confusing since during the lessons some of the students expressed their dislikes towards some of the songs. When I asked them what happened and why they changed their minds, the students told me that those songs were not so bad and that they finally liked the activities connected to the songs (those songs were *Tak nějak málo tančím* and the *Elizabethan serenade*). All the students agreed that it was nice that I played some songs for them since it was an exciting moment in the lessons. They added that it would be nice to involve, at least once a week, a song in a regular English lesson. These findings accord with literature that considers songs as excellent means of motivation, relaxed atmosphere and mainly friendly way of teaching and learning. When I asked the students if they enjoyed working in groups/pairs, the answers varied. Some of the students stated that not all the members in groups wanted to communicate with others and that it would have been better to organize the communicative song-based activities rather as a pair-work since the students prefer working in pairs than in groups. However, some of the students claimed that they had a great fun during group work and that they could talk about their musical tastes. Although the students’ opinions on working in pairs/groups varied, the students told me that they found talking about music motivating and useful for them and that the music represents a topic they would like to talk about more often. As Foralová confirms: “In addition, most students, as students themselves report, are more ‘eager’ to share their ideas and impressions with a few closer classmates than with the whole class or the teacher. This may help to increase students' motivation to embark upon the task at all and also to complete it” [Foralová, 2007: 71].

7.2. Reflections upon the components of song-based communicative activities

The following passage deals with the conclusions mentioned in the reflections compared to the theory of using songs in EFL classes.

Selection of songs

The question of an appropriate selection of songs represents the first crucial step in order to succeed when thinking about integrating songs to English lessons. The Professional Project proved what Cranmer and Laroy, Orlova and other methodologists stated and that was the fact that the teacher has to believe in the power of the song he/she is taking to a class. This basic presumption that was stated in the methodological part of this paper helped to maintain the students' attention when I was introducing the songs. For example, in the songs *Nobody Knows You* or *Tears in Heaven*, I showed the students that I know the song very well, that I can explain the origins of the songs and that I can even play one of these songs for them. This contributed to the fact that the students were interested in the activity, they could realize the purpose and therefore they were willing to cooperate in the following work. Nevertheless, to believe in the song is not enough. The teacher has to bear in mind whether the song fits in the lesson. This meant that the activities were logically linked and aimed to change the task, for example from reading to listening or speaking, or that the activities were aimed to relax the students. Moreover, sometimes the song-based activity was aimed to practise and revise some grammatical patterns in a relaxed way through the songs. As for the example, the students were to listen to the live song *Nobody Knows You* and fill in the gaps the verbs in the past simple. All the songs were chosen according to the students' age, according to the appropriate lyrics and according to the presence of the 'message'. All these factors proved to play a very important role. As a consequence of this preparation, the students were able to understand the song and therefore they were able to do the activities. Moreover, if I wanted the students understand the 'message' of the song, then the lyrics were not aimed to be difficult and as regards the melody, it always had to express some emotions. That the students could understand the 'message' and were able to feel these emotions was indicated by their ability to express and exchange their ideas about the songs.

Role of motivation

“Songs can help the teacher with the initial motivation because the fact itself that they are so pleasurable to listen to is motivational enough...” [Rosová, 2008: 38].

The role of motivation is very important if the teacher wants to involve students in the teaching process. Although songs are regarded generally as a really motivating prompt to a variety of activities and tasks in EFL classes, the teacher has to vary the context under which songs are worked with. The real impulse that made the students be motivated and looked forward to the song-based activities was that I involved several different strategies when working with the songs. Therefore, the planned activities involved different organizational forms, a variety of tasks as well as incorporating the live music that helped to create the unique atmosphere in each of the classes. The students enjoyed the live music and, that was even more important, they were eager to participate in the follow-up communicative activities. In this case, the students were motivated through the intrinsic kind of motivation that was derived from their ‘inner’ interests in the live music, in the lyrics of a song, in a popular group. Intrinsically motivated students are compelled to do much better in classroom activities, because they are willing and eager to learn new material. The fact that the activities contained the tasks and the students could express their opinions contributed to the students’ willingness and motivation to talk during the following pair/group work. All the factors mentioned above supported the idea that songs, if carefully prepared, can motivate the students to communicate among themselves.

Conditions for communication

When preparing a task to be discussed in pairs/groups, it is always important to be aware of the presence of ‘gaps’. The song-based communicative activities contained the tasks that were deliberately set in order to provide the ‘gaps’. The ‘information gap’ presented in the first activity was in the missing information that the students had to find out. In the next activities, the presence of ‘opinion-curiosity gaps’ was in the difference of the students’ opinions on the songs. As for the example, the students expressed their opinions on the song “*Tak nějak málo tančím*” when they were talking with their colleagues about the author of this song and about the ‘message’ of the song. Both types of

the ‘gaps’ were crucial for the basis of the students’ communication. Another aspect that contributed to the development of the students’ communication was that the students could build their opinions on the list of possible speech acts. As the students needed to be prepared to talk, this list meant a basic preparation for discussions. The students were encouraged to remember this list and to evoke some expressions at the beginning of the activities when I asked the students for some general questions concerning a following topic. However, not only these basic factors can stand for justifying the fact that students will talk to each other. Another basic condition for raising communication among the students was the fact, according to my observations, that the activities took place in a relaxed yet working atmosphere when the students felt safe because they had supportive material (handouts), they were properly prepared and mainly that they discussed the topics that were close to them. The students expressed their opinions, listened to their colleagues and sometimes even developed their chat little further.

Although these ‘chats’ were mostly about exchanging a few opinions and did not lead to a long conversation among the students (there was no extra time to practise their speaking skills, therefore the difficultness of their conversation was limited to their actual knowledge of English), it was verified that there was a kind of stimulus based on the songs which made them talk to others. The point was that everybody had at least some ideas that he/she was able to tell the others and therefore these moments of exchanging the opinions could be regarded as a kind of communication among the students.

7.3. Final summary

This Professional Project tried to prove that incorporating songs to English lessons can stimulate students to communicate among themselves. All the planned activities verified that the songs could motivate the students positively towards learning English. As regards the whole communication among the students (although some of the students expressed their opinions only in several words), they were willing to communicate about the songs. The question whether the songs could stand for a good starting point for a discussion was also confirmed since the students were stimulated to talk and therefore they exchanged their opinions and shared their ideas with their colleagues. The last question to answer is whether the tasks for the discussions were appropriate so that the tasks could

represent the 'information/opinion gaps'. Basically, due to the fact that the students' musical tastes were different and not all of the students had the same opinions, the songs in general contained these 'gaps'. The possibility for the students to talk about something that was close to them, the possibility to talk to their colleagues in the friendly atmosphere supported the idea that songs could stand for a topic worth talking about. Moreover, giving the students opportunity to talk about music, about the topic that they were familiar with, enhanced the students' self-confidence to express their thoughts, which was necessary for further development of their communication skills.

Songs can represent an effective stimulus that may evoke feelings of excitement and enthusiasm. If students can share these feelings with their teacher and vice versa, then the process of learning and teaching is something that really pays off.

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Appendix No. 1 - *The list of possible speech acts*

(partly adapted from Klippel 2005, Laroy – Cranmer 1992)

✂-----

expressing one's opinion

I think...

I feel that...

In my opinion...

asking for someone's opinion

Do you think that...?

What do you feel/think about...?

Are you sure that...?

asking for reasons

Why?

Why do you think that?

What makes you feel that?

agreeing

Yes, that's right.

That's what I feel, too.

I think so, too.

Exactly.

I agree with you.

I feel that X is right.

disagreeing

I don't agree.

I don't think so.

You can't say that.

That's not the point/question/problem...

expressing certainty and uncertainty, probability and possibility

I'm absolutely certain that.../I'm not...

I'm sure that.../I'm not sure that...

There is definitely...

There may be...

Perhaps...

I don't think that...

...is not possible.

expressing likes and dislikes

I love/like...

...is great/very good/fun/fantastic.

I enjoy...

What I like best is...

I hate/dislike...

What I don't like about ...is...

some feelings that a song may

evoke:

joy, happiness, excitement,
triumph

calmness, peacefulness,

regret, melancholy, nostalgia,
longing

grief, sadness, pain, sorrow,

fear, anxiety, foreboding

some reactions to music:

boring, exciting, relaxing,
restful

Appendix No. 2 – Identity Cards

(adapted from Klippel 2005, Norman 1986)

a)

1) my nickname
2) my favourite singer
3) I am good at...
1)
2)
3)

b)

Firstly, fill in with your opinions (put a ☒ to show what kind of music you usually like, or usually do not like) then ask your colleague: Do you usually like...

I

Colleague

like	don't like			likes	doesn't like
		classical music			
		pop music			
		jazz/blues			
		hip hop / ska			
			Czech singers/bands?		
			↖ for example: ↗ ↙ ↘		

Do you like listening rather to Czech or English songs? Ask your colleague!

Appendix No. 3 – *Tak nějak málo tančím*

(key: 1) *a tone, roofs* 2) *to have a fight, a bath* R) *over thirty* 3) *a basin* 4) *the right direction*
5) *to dance, kiss, cry, sing*



Kryštof - *Tak nějak málo tančím*

1)

Všem strunám řeky toužím být _____
všem okapovým loužím jejich břeh,
signálu antén sklon _____
a pustit uzdu kormidlům.

2)

Aspoň potápěčem v houfu se stát,
chytit svojí vlnku s ní _____
s krabičky mýdla mít vor _____
a sjíždět _____ bez závor.

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, líbám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti _____ .

3)

A v _____ tůni chci mít,
v solničkách zas vůni majáků,
ze starých školních pijáků
postavit záchranný člun.

4)

A velrybu ladně v dlani skrýt
a hloubku moře na dně talířů,
ve skafandru s halířů
vyrazit v ten _____

R: Tak nějak málo tančím,
zpívám, brečím, líbám,
marně si hledám tep,
jsem prý dospělý a to je svět,
když je ti přes třicet.

5)

Tak nějak málo _____
Tak nějak málo _____
Tak nějak málo _____
Tak nějak málo _____

1) What do you know about the Czech band “KRYŠTOF” (How many members? Any front man? The musical genre?...)

2 a) Try to agree on five key words of the lyrics!

b) Try to tell your colleagues why...
Do you prefer recorded or live music?
Do you like when your teacher sings a song? Why?

Appendix No. 4 – *Elizabethan serenade*

(questions adapted from Cranmer and Laroy, 1992)

Elizabethan serenade by Ronald Binge

What feelings or words come to your mind when you are listening to this song?

Do you find this classical music boring?

Try to draw the picture of the woman this song is about!



Appendix No. 5 – Would You Know My Name

(key: 1: would, same, strong, hand, stand, way)



Tears in Heaven by Eric Clapton

Would/Will you know my name

If I saw you in heaven?

Would it be the same/sin

If I saw you in heaven?

I must be strong/wrong, and carry on

'Cause I know I don't belong

Here in heaven

Would you hold my had/hand

If I saw you in heaven?

Would you help me stand/pray

If I saw you in heaven?

I'll find my home/way, through night and day

'Cause I know I just can't stay

Here in heaven

Time can bring you down

Time can bend your knee

Time can break your hand/heart

Have you begging please

Begging please

(instrumental bridge)

Beyond the door

There's peace I'm sure

And I know there'll be no more

Tears in heaven

...

Discuss with your partner!

1) Which words fits better!

(would or will, same or sin...)

2a) Who is the song about?

(Do you think that the song is about
e.g. animals? Or about any people?
Or...?)

2b) Try to think about another
strophe with would-if construction!

3a) Try to connect the following
words with any part in the lyrics! (a
son, hard life, grief)

3b) Do you know any song which has
the powerful lyrics-story for you?

Appendix No. 6 – *Nobody Knows You*

(key: lived, spent, took, bought, began, lost, did)



Fill in the verbs in the PAST SIMPLE!

☺ Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out ☹ by Eric Clapton

Once I _ _ _ _ _ the life of a millionaire,
I _ _ _ _ _ all my money, I just did not care.
I _ _ _ _ _ all my friends out for good time,
I _ _ _ _ _ a bottle of whiskey, champagne and wine.

Ref. But no, nobody knows you
In your pocket, not one penny,
And as for friends, you don't have any.

Then I _ _ _ _ _ to fall so low,
I _ _ _ _ _ all my good friends, I _ _ _ not have where to go.
But if I put my hands on a dollar again,
Everybody wants to be my friend again

Discuss with your partner!

Do you think that Eric had a really hard life? Why?

Why did Eric lose all his friends?

Did you like the song?

What is the musical genre of the song? (pop, country, jazz...)

Imagine that you have a million pounds! What will you buy?

Appendix No. 7 – *Pictures for Grouping Students*

